
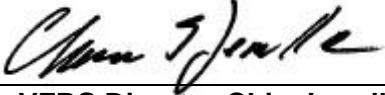
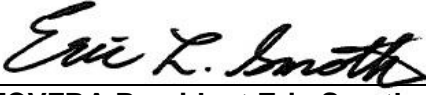
	Frederick County, Maryland Division of Fire and Rescue Services STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	
	2.02.18	Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
Effective Date: May 31, 2017	Page 1 of 3	
Revised Date: April 19, 2013	Related Forms:	
Approved:  DFRS Director/Chief Tom W. Owens		
Reviewed:	 VFRS Director Chip Jewell	 FCVFRA President Eric Smothers

SECTION I: PURPOSE

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is intended to help individuals exposed to critical incidents, identify and cope with their emotional and physiological responses to these events. CISM is focused on maintaining the health and productivity of responders; preventing the effects traumatic stress; restoring responders to normal functions; speeding the recovery from stress; and enhancing the overall environment in which first responders work. It is not the function of CISM or the CISM Team to replace professional counseling, but to provide stress management education and immediate crisis intervention.

SECTION II: APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all personnel of the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS) and member company personnel of the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (FCVFRA).

SECTION III: DEFINITIONS

- A. **CRITICAL INCIDENT:** A sudden powerful traumatic event that is beyond the range of normal on-the-job experiences of a first responder.
- B. **CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS:** A physical, emotional and/or behavioral response that accompanies the crisis reaction. The elevated state of stress is caused by a critical incident or cumulative exposures to such events. It can be a normal reaction, by a normal person, to an abnormal situation; however, if not managed and resolved appropriately, either by oneself or with assistance, it may lead to several psychological disorders including acute stress disorder, panic attacks, depression, abuse of alcohol and other drugs, etc.
- C. **CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM):** A comprehensive, systematic and integrated multi-component crisis intervention approach to manage critical incident stress after traumatic events. CISM is a coordinated program to alleviate the reactions to a traumatic experience.

- D. CISM TEAM: An organized group of individuals trained to support public safety personnel who are involved in emergency operations. The purpose of this group is to assist in mitigating long-term effects of stress.
- E. DEACTIVATION: The removal of an affected individual from duty for the remainder of his/her shift and the recommendation should be coordinated with the individual's officer or supervisor.
- F. DEBRIEFING: A group meeting about a critical incident designed to mitigate the impact of said incident; to assist the personnel involved in recovering from the stress associated with the event. The meeting, or debriefing, is peer driven and clinician guided, with seven distinctive and structured phases, it should occur within 24-72 hours of the event.
- G. DEFUSING: A shortened version of the debriefing, lasting 20-45 minutes comprised of three segments: Introduction, Exploration, and Information. It must be provided within 8 hours of an incident, is conducted by peers, and may eliminate the need to provide a formal debriefing. If a debriefing is needed, the defusing is an excellent preparatory step for that intervention.
- H. DEMOBILIZATION: Reserved for large scale incidents and disasters, 30 minutes are devoted to informational dissemination, food and rest. It is to assess the well-being of the membership, mitigate the impact of the event, provide stress management information and provide an opportunity for rest and food before dismissal or return to duties. It also provides information to the CISM interventionist regarding the need for debriefing and other services.
- I. FACILITATOR: A mental health professional who is a licensed clinician and is trained in disaster psychology, crisis intervention, stress level assessment and critical incident stress debriefing and is familiar with public safety operations.
- J. ONE-ON-ONE: An individual meeting with a peer support member designed to return the employee to function, mitigate symptoms of stressful event(s) and/or make referrals as needed. This meeting may take place during the affected individual's tour of duty, or at any other time and place. The meeting may be initiated by an officer; however, it may come as a suggestion from a co-worker, supervisor or the individual who is affected. A peer support member may initiate the session after learning about the incident.
- K. PEER SUPPORT: Selected individuals who provide support of personnel involved in critical incidents through one on one contacts, defusing, demobilizations, debriefings and follow up contacts. These members will have successfully completed the ICISF training courses: Critical Incident Stress Management: Group Crisis Intervention and Critical Incident Stress Management: Individual Crisis Intervention & Peer Support.
- L. PRE-INCIDENT EDUCATION: Information provided to personnel and their families to improve coping skills, increase awareness of symptoms of critical incident stress, suicide, depression, and anxiety that may occur as a result of involvement in a critical incident.

SECTION IV: PROCEDURES

- A. Personnel are encouraged to observe and report any need for mental health support which may be required on a personal level or by others showing signs of critical incident stress.
- B. Personnel choosing to utilize the Division's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may initiate the services on their own. The service is free and confidential to both career and

volunteer personnel. The EAP will serve as the referral service for any personnel requiring services beyond those available by a CISM Team.

- C. All programs are strictly voluntary. Although no one is forced to attend any portion of a program, everyone involved in an incident is highly encouraged to attend. Only those persons directly involved in a critical incident are allowed to participate in the CISM programs, others will be required to leave.
- D. All programs are held in the strictest confidence. All participants must agree to keep the names of persons participating in the session and the content of the session confidential. Failure to comply with this requirement shall result in disciplinary action.
- E. Pre-incident education and post-incident follow-up such as one on one meetings or stress prevention techniques may be made available at the discretion of the Captain of Safety utilizing Division-approved peer support.
- F. Critical Incident Stress Management support will be provided by DFRS trained members of the Frederick County CISM Team. Incident commanders and/or chief officers can request a team response via the Emergency Communications Center.
- G. CISM Team representatives will make notification to on-scene personnel and determine action required (debriefing, defusing, demobilization and/or deactivation).
- H. Types of incidents which require a mandatory CISM Team activation:
 - 1. Terrorism/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
 - 2. Serious injury or death of an employee or member when responding to or on scene of an incident.
 - 3. Mass Casualty Incidents (MCI)
 - 4. Death/Suicide of an employee or member.
 - 5. Death and/or violence to a child.
 - 6. Loss of life following extraordinary and prolonged expenditures of physical and emotional energy during rescue efforts.
 - 7. Any incident with a need identified by the incident commander.
- I. Types of incidents when activation of a CISM Team is optional:
 - 1. Incidents that attract extremely unusual or extensive media coverage.
 - 2. Incidents in which circumstances are extremely bizarre (i.e. incidents that are extremely large or take an unusually long time.
 - 3. "Bad Calls"
 - 4. Any meaningful event (real or perceived) affecting the first responder.
 - 5. Any incident with a need identified by the incident commander.
- J. Requests for CISM services such as a one on one or for consultation regarding CISM team activation, contact the on-duty Safety Officer who in turn will notify the Captain of Safety.
- K. An information bulletin will be disseminated detailing the date, time and location of the CISM program. Additionally, persons more closely affected by a critical incident should be identified and provided with the details of the CISM program and encouraged to participate. In the event that they should decline, information regarding the County's EAP service should be disseminated.