



Operating Procedure

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Amended	Operating Level Department
Supersedes Operating Procedure 145.5 (1/1/17)	
Authority COV §53.1-10, § 53.1-25, §54.1-3601	
ACA/PREA Standards §115.67[b], §115.267[b]	
Office of Primary Responsibility Chief of Field Operations	

Subject
CRITICAL INCIDENT PEER SUPPORT TEAM

Incarcerated Offender Access Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Access Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Attachments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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I. PURPOSE

This operating procedure defines the structure and utilization of the Department of Corrections Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) Team which was established to minimize the effects caused by critical incidents on DOC employees and to assist employees cope effectively with their reactions to these incidents in order to maintain a healthy and effective workforce.

II. COMPLIANCE

This operating procedure applies to all units operated by the Department of Corrections (DOC). Practices and procedures shall comply with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, Board of Corrections policies and regulations, ACA standards, PREA standards, and DOC directives and operating procedures.

III. DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident - Any incident, action, or event outside the range of usual work experience that may cause a significant emotional reaction in an employee

Critical Incident Debriefing - An individual or group meeting designed to reduce the probability that staff involved in a serious incident will experience long-term consequences of traumatic stress

Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) Team - A statewide network of volunteers comprised of DOC employees who are specially trained in critical incident stress management strategies and methodology in order to provide confidential assistance to employees who have experienced a critical incident

- **CIPS Team Coordinator** - The Chief of Field Operations shall serve as the CIPS Team Coordinator whose responsibilities include the establishment of minimum training guidelines, schedule required trainings and meetings and maintain records on CIPS teams' activations and activities statewide.
- **CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator** - The Regional Operations Chief will serve as the assistant CIPS Team Coordinator for the performance of all duties associated with management of the regional CIPS Team to include oversight of the recruitment, appointment, organization, maintenance, training, and removal of team members as well as monitoring and tracking of CIPS training and operational activities of their regional CIPS team.
- **CIPS Team Leader** - A team member designated by the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator to assist with the recruitment, appointment, organization, maintenance, training, and removal of team members as well as the coordination of CIPS training and operational activities of their regional CIPS team
- **CIPS Assistant Team Leader** - A CIPS team member designated by the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator to assist the team leader with their duties and responsibilities; this individual shall be responsible for maintaining a current recall roster of all CIPS team members, and notifying the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator of any changes.
- **CIPS Team Members** - Peer Supporters from a range of disciplines who received special training to recognize stress-related symptoms; peer supporters are often the initial on-scene contact to provide basic support to a staff member involved in a critical incident. QMHP's trained in trauma informed care or crisis management may serve as trainers or consultants but are not eligible to serve as peer

supporters.

Critical Incident Stress - Emotional, psychological, or physical consequences following a critical incident, action, or event; the degree of life threat experienced during the incident, the speed of onset of the incident and its duration, the loss of significant others, and the potential for reoccurrence impact the extent and severity to which these consequences occur.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) - Programs and strategies designed to mitigate the effects of critical incidents in employees on the scene or employees responding to the incident and to assist them in managing and recovering from significant critical incident stress

Group Response Intervention Team (GRIT) - A select group of DOC QMHPs who have been trained specifically to assist employees who have experienced a serious work-related incident; the primary goal is to help employees cope with the experience as effectively as possible through a formal group debriefing process.

Organizational Unit Head - The person occupying the highest position in a DOC unit, such as a correctional facility, regional office, probation and parole office, Virginia Correctional Enterprises (VCE), Academy for Staff Development, Corrections Construction Unit, Agribusiness Unit, and individual headquarters unit (i.e. Human Resources, Offender Management, Internal Audit).

Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) - An individual employed in a designated mental health services position as a Psychologist or Psychology Associate, Psychiatric Provider, Social Worker (Masters level) or Registered Nurse, or an individual with at least a Master's degree in psychology, social work, or relevant human services field with knowledge, training, and skills in the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Mission of the Critical Incident Peer Support Team

1. The primary mission of the Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) team is to help employees either directly or indirectly involved in a critical incident cope as effectively as possible with their reactions to the incident in a healthy and positive manner by providing on-scene peer support services and follow-up support services during the employee's readjustment period.
2. Employee issues, such as lay-offs (facility closing), death of a non-employee family member, etc. should be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in accordance with Operating Procedure 150.5, *Employee Assistance Program*, or referred to other internal departments.
3. Employees who fear retaliation for reporting or cooperating with investigations into sexual abuse or sexual harassment and are in need of or request emotional support services should be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). (§115.67[b], §115.267[b])

B. CIPS Team Activation and Response

1. The CIPS team may be requested to respond to employees who are impacted by a critical incident. Such incidents include, but are not be limited to:
 - a. Line of duty death
 - b. Death of an employee
 - c. Serious line of duty injury or assault on an employee
 - d. Suicide of an employee
 - e. Hostage situation
 - f. Manmade or natural disasters
 - g. Threat situations (bomb, terrorist, active shooter), riots, and disturbances
2. CIPS team activation is mandatory for the following critical incidents:
 - a. Line of duty death or serious injury or other unnatural death of an employee
 - b. Any manmade or natural disasters, threat situations (bomb, terrorist, active shooter), riots, and

disturbances to which employees respond

3. CIPS Team Activation

- a. Each CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator is permitted to establish a region specific process to govern the request for and activation of the CIPS Team for their Region.
- b. Any employee who becomes aware of a critical incident is encouraged to notify a supervisor. Any supervisor upon learning that an employee has been involved in a critical incident shall immediately inform the Organizational Unit Head who will notify and consult with the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator or designee to assess the need for:
 - i. On-scene support services
 - ii. Demobilization
 - iii. Defusing
 - iv. Debriefing
 - v. Individual consultation
- c. When a critical incident occurs and activation of the CIPS Team is requested by the Organizational Unit Head and approved by the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator/ designee, or the incident requires mandatory activation, the CIPS Team Leader or CIPS Assistant Team Leader for the affected region shall activate the CIPS team and deploy team members.
 - i. When requesting CIPS Team activation, the Organizational Unit Head or designee must provide the CIPS Team Leader with the following information:
 - (a) Time and location of the incident
 - (b) Nature of the incident
 - (c) Services requested (On-scene support, Demobilization, Defusing, Debriefing, Individual Consultation, etc.)
 - (d) The number of employees directly or indirectly involved
 - (e) Contact information for employees physically injured
 - (f) Current status of the incident.
 - ii. The CIPS Team Leader will determine the team members assigned to respond to and/ or provide services to the employees involved in the critical incident. Team members should not routinely be used when they are on call for their regular job duties.
 - iii. When a CIPS team member is assigned to respond, the only information that will be released to the team member's supervisor is notification of the employee's required participation.
 - iv. The CIPS Team Leader may request additional CIPS team members from other regions as needed.
 - v. The CIPS Team Leader will complete the [CIPS Team Activation](#) 075_F12 and forward a copy to CIPS Team Coordinator and the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator.
- d. The Organizational Unit Head or designee shall:
 - i. Ensure employees are aware of the date, time, and location where services will be provided and their eligibility to participate
 - ii. Coordinate the provision of services with the CIPS Team Leader for their unit
 - iii. Ensure that physical and logistical requirements have been finalized
 - iv. Provide CIPS team members with all information related to the incident, including but not limited to:
 - (a) Pictures
 - (b) Diagrams
 - (c) Incident Reports
 - (d) Audio/ Video tapes
 - (e) Newspaper Articles

C. Organization and Responsibilities of the Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) Team

1. The statewide CIPS team is comprised of the CIPS Team Coordinator, CIPS Assistant Team Coordinators, CIPS Team Leaders, CIPS Assistant Team Leaders, and CIPS Team Members.

- a. The statewide CIPS team is divided by regions, each regional team consists of an Assistant Team Coordinator, Team Leader, Assistant Team Leader, and a minimum of seven employees who voluntarily serve as peer supporters in their region.
 - b. Each CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator will designate a Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader for their region.
2. Responsibilities of the CIPS Team Coordinator
- a. Establish training curriculum and minimum training requirements such as annual in-service and quarterly team meetings
 - b. Coordinate Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) training for CIPS team members (Peer Supporters).
 - c. Maintain records on CIPS teams' activations and activities for all regions and review the annual report submitted by each region on the utilization of the CIPS Team services provided under the CISM program
3. Responsibilities of the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator or designee
- a. Oversee the recruitment, appointment, and removal process of team members
 - b. Ensure the Team Leaders' contact information and a current recall roster of all CIPS team members is disseminated to all DOC units and the CIPS Team Coordinator
 - c. Maintain records on CIPS teams' activations and activities for the region and prepare an annual report on the utilization of the CIPS Team services provided under the CISM program for review by the CIPS Team Coordinator prior to submission to the Chief of Corrections Operations
 - d. Ensure CIPS team members do not interfere with any on-going criminal or administrative investigations
4. Responsibilities of the Team Leaders and Assistant Team Leaders
- a. Recruit CIPS team members and coordinate with CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator on the appointment and removal of team members
 - b. Maintain a current recall roster of all CIPS team members, and notify the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator of any changes
 - c. Coordinate CIPS team activities while keeping the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator informed
 - d. Activate the CIPS team and respond or designate members of the team to respond and document CIPS activation on the [CIPS Team Activation](#) 075_F12
 - e. Track CIPS teams' activations and activities for the region and when necessary, coordinate follow-up services
 - f. Ensure CIPS Team members are notified and attend required CISM training and quarterly meetings
5. Responsibilities of CIPS team members
- a. Respond to incidents within or outside their respective region as directed by the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator or their regional Team Leader.
 - b. Provide follow-up services to employees who need or want additional support
 - c. Ensure that all information received during the debriefing, defusing, demobilization, and individual consultation remains confidential and is only shared in accordance with this operating procedure.
 - d. Document notification, services provided, and any disclosure of confidential information on the [CIPS Team Member Response Report](#) 075_F13
 - e. Attend required CISM training and quarterly team meetings
- D. Application and Selection Criteria for CIPS Team Members
1. Employee requests to serve as a voluntary member of the CIPS team must be made in writing to the

Organizational Unit Head and submitted through the CIPS Team Leader to the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator.

2. Requests from employees at Headquarters to serve as a CIPS team member must be made in writing to their Unit Head and submitted through the CIPS Team Leader to the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator for the Central Region.
3. CIPS team members will be selected by a panel consisting of the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator, CIPS Team Leader, and one other CIPS team member.
4. Candidates should possess at least three years of experience as a DOC employee.
5. Candidates should possess a clear understanding of the program purpose, objectives, and guidelines.
6. Candidates must have a positive reputation among their peers and supervisors and be well adjusted in both their personal and professional environments.
7. Candidates should have a sincere desire to assist their fellow employees and be willing to respect and maintain confidentiality.
8. Candidates must be willing to respond to:
 - a. Emergency callouts
 - b. Scheduled training
 - c. Requests for unforeseen services as directed by the CIPS Team Coordinator or CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator

E. Critical Incident Stress Management Program

1. The main Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) strategies utilized to mitigate the effects of critical incidents on employees and to assist employees in managing and recovering from significant critical incident stress include:
 - a. Defusing: A small group process which is instituted after any traumatic incident, action, or event powerful enough to overwhelm the coping mechanisms of the employee exposed to it.
 - b. Demobilization: A brief intervention immediately after a disaster or major incident which provides a transition period from the major incident back to the normal work routine.
 - c. Post Critical Incident Seminar (PCIS): A training and counseling seminar for employee who have previously been involved in a critical incident
 - d. On-Scene Support Services: Support services provided at the scene of a critical or traumatic event or incident.
 - e. Critical Incident Briefing: A briefing conducted in an open forum where there is little or no control over who is in attendance. An overview of the event is provided, followed by instruction on stress and positive coping methods. An opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions may be offered, but discussion is not facilitated or encouraged by CIPS team members. The facts of the incident should be provided by a Public Information Officer or other ranking employee who is authorized to speak publicly about the incident.
 - f. Critical Incident Debriefing: An individual or group meeting or discussion usually held 24 to 72 hours after an incident and is targeted toward mitigating psychological distress associated with a critical incident or traumatic event.
 - g. Special Event Support: In the case of a line of duty death or other tragedy, members may be asked to provide CIPS team services to employees attending a funeral, viewing, memorial, or other service.
2. Employees involved in a critical incident are encouraged to participate in the services provided under the CISM Program, but employee participation is voluntary.

F. Provision of Services

1. All information shared during debriefing, defusing, demobilization, and individual consultation

conducted by CIPS team members providing services is confidential except for information that involves danger to the employee or others and matters of a criminal nature.

- a. Information concerning violations of DOC operating procedures and possible criminal activity will be shared as appropriate to include notification to the Special Investigations Unit in accordance with Operating Procedure 030.4, *Special Investigations Unit*.
 - b. Each CIPS Team member will complete a [CIPS Team Member Response Report](#) 075_F13 to document their notification, services provided to the employee, and when necessary, the disclosure of confidential information; the [CIPS Team Member Response Report](#) 075_F13 must be submitted to the CIPS Team Leader or Assistant Team Leader within two working days.
 - c. No notes, recordings, or other records of information exposed during CIPS activities other than the [CIPS Team Activation](#) 075_F12 and the [CIPS Team Member Response Report](#) 075_F13 will be made or maintained by the CIPS team.
2. On-scene Support
- a. The deployed CIPS team member(s) will respond to the critical incident scene as directed by the CIPS Team Leader. Depending on the dynamics of the incident, there may be multiple scenes where employees may be located following an incident.
 - b. Upon arrival, CIPS team members will inform on-scene supervisors of their arrival.
 - i. Responding teams' first responsibility is to provide support for the affected employees.
 - ii. For major incidents, every effort will be made to provide multiple team members for each identified scene so that support of supervisors, as described above, can be accomplished.
 - c. Contact will be made with the affected employee(s) to:
 - i. Assess the employee's emotional need
 - ii. Support self-esteem and self-reliance
 - iii. Offer team services, as appropriate
 - iv. Activate the affected employee's social support network
3. Defusing, Demobilization, and Debriefing
- a. The deployed CIPS team members(s) will respond to a predetermined location for the prescribed event at the direction of the CIPS Team Leader.
 - b. Support of a trained QMHP is required for a formal debriefing session.
4. The Group Response Intervention Team (GRIT) is available to respond to, and provide support for employees directly or indirectly involved in a serious work-related incident when the CIPS Team Coordinator or CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator has requested a formal debriefing as a supplement to other services already provided, per Operating Procedure 075.8, *Group Response Intervention Team*.
5. Follow-up services
- a. The CIPS team will remain available to the employee for follow-up services during the readjustment period.
 - b. Follow-up services will be provided to ensure all employees who need or want additional support are given support from the team.
 - c. Follow-up services will be provided to employees who participated in the defusing, demobilization, or debriefing immediately after the initial session is complete.
 - d. Additional follow-up services, if requested, include but are not limited to:
 - i. Work location visit
 - ii. Telephone call
 - iii. Individual consultation
 - iv. Referral to the EAP
 - v. Additional group meeting
 - e. Follow-up services may be initiated by:

- i. Participant through a telephone call or personal appearance
 - ii. Supervisor request that a team member check on a participant
 - iii. Team member
 - iv. Organizational Unit Head
 - v. CIPS Team Coordinator or Assistant Team Coordinator for the purpose of quality assurance
- f. CIPS team members will maintain continued contact with their CIPS Team Leader or Assistant Team Leader.

G. Operational Considerations

1. CIPS team members shall not interfere with any on-going criminal or administrative investigations. Noncompliance with this requirement may result in referral for disciplinary action under Operating Procedure 135.1, *Standards of Conduct*.
2. This operating procedure does not interfere with the voluntary use of or referral to any other related programs or services.
3. Responding CIPS team members shall be considered on duty and on special assignment.
 - a. If DOC vehicles are not available, team members are eligible for travel reimbursement in accordance with Operating Procedure 240.1, *Travel*.
 - b. See Operating Procedure 110.2, *Overtime and Schedule Adjustments*, for employee compensation.
4. The CIPS Team Leaders, Assistant Team Leaders, and all CIPS team members shall serve at the pleasure of the CIPS Assistant Team Coordinator and may be removed from their positions at any time without cause or warning. .
5. A CIPS member may be removed from the team at any time following formal disciplinary action or for engaging in conduct that might be deemed detrimental to the DOC or the credibility of the program.

V. REFERENCES

Operating Procedure 030.4, *Special Investigations Unit*
Operating Procedure 110.2, *Overtime and Schedule Adjustments*
Operating Procedure 135.1, *Standards of Conduct*
Operating Procedure 150.5, *Employee Assistance Program*
Operating Procedure 240.1, *Travel*

VI. FORM CITATIONS

[CIPS Team Activation](#) 075_F12
[CIPS Team Member Response Report](#) 075_F13

VII. REVIEW DATE

The office of primary responsibility shall review this operating procedure annually and re-write it no later than three years after the effective date.

Signature Copy on File

6/26/18

A. David Robinson, Chief of Corrections Operations

Date