



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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EMS Transmission: 10/24/2019
Instruction Memorandum, No. FA IM-2020-003
Expires: 09/30/2021

To: State and Center Directors
From: Acting Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation Directorate
Subject: Critical Incident Stress Management Program Policy DD: January 1, 2021

Program Area: Fire and Aviation Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program.

Purpose: The purpose of this Instruction Memorandum (IM) is to:

- Establish a standard of care for peer support, training and certification.
- Formally adopt qualification requirements for peer supporters in the CISM program.
- Clarify CISM requesting processes for fire and non-fire incidents.
- Communicate access to CISM Websites and content.

The intent of this IM is to serve as interim guidance until a national interagency CISM framework is approved and released.

Administrative or Mission Related: Administrative

Policy/Action:

Standard of Care & Certification

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fire & Aviation Program is committed to crisis intervention practices adhering to the Standard of Care established by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF), in providing stabilization of personnel and preventing further harm. A licensed Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) is required to assist Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) Groups. Peer Supporters are not trained nor are they qualified to operate independently; doing so is a violation of the established Boundaries of Competence and compromises the integrity of the program.

Additionally, the BLM Fire & Aviation Program acknowledges and utilizes the ICISF as the accepted industry standard for training and certification of BLM CISM program personnel. The CISM Basic Course is required for CISM Team Members, and by January 1, 2021, the CISM Advanced Course is required for CISM Team Leaders. These are approved ICISF courses that will be offered based on Geographical need and are intended for law enforcement, fire, aviation, and other agency personnel who will be trained to identify with their peers who have experienced a critical incident. The courses provides training in positive coping strategies for stress, and to help others validate their thoughts and emotions surrounding a critical incident. Current CISM Team Leaders needing the advanced course will be prioritized in calendar year 2020 courses.

1. CISM Basic Course (Required for Team Member)
 - The CISM Basic training includes two courses (1) [Assisting Individuals in Crisis](#) and (2) [Assisting Groups in Crisis](#).
2. CISM Advanced Course (Required for Team Leader)
 - The CISM Advanced training includes two courses (1) [Advanced Assisting Individuals in Crisis](#) and (2) [Advanced Assisting Groups in Crisis](#)

CISM Qualifications

All BLM Personnel participating in a CISM response shall be qualified as a Critical Incident Stress Management Team Member (CISM) or as a Critical Incident Stress Management Team Leader (CISL). Position qualifications are adopted from the [DOI Incident Positions Qualifications Guide](#) (IPQG) and will be in the [Federal Wildland Qualification Supplement](#) by January 1, 2021.

Special consideration shall be given when recommending or approving either CISM or CISL. A recommendation by the employee's Fire Management Officer is required. This recommendation will go to the Geographical Area Coordination Center (GACC) CISM coordinator for approval. If the GACC does not have a CISM program or coordinator, recommendations must be sent to the BLM National CISM Coordinator for approval. Approval for CISL qualifications will be made by the BLM National CISM Coordinator after review of a recommendation from the employee's State Fire Management Officer and GACC CISM coordinator (if GACC has a CISM coordinator).

CISM Request Processes

The BLM's Fire and Aviation CISM Program is intended for employees who work in the fire and aviation program with work-related needs, but may assist other employees as needed and requested. *Crisis intervention should be based on recognition of need, not strictly the occurrence of an event.* What is appropriate will depend on the nature, severity and duration of the event; the number, skills and cohesiveness of those involved; and the severity of their physical and emotional symptoms. The CISM Program does not replace professional counseling and other services available to employees through the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), but it does help align these resources as an appropriate next step when applicable.

- 1) Fire Request
 - The BLM does not maintain standing CISM Teams or an on-call rotation. An Agency Administrator or designee requests CISM through their Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) CISM Coordinator. If the GACC does not have a CISM Coordinator, the GACC will notify the BLM National CISM Coordinator. A CIPS group will be assembled at the time of request and will be composed of members who align with the backgrounds and experience of those involved in the critical incident (e.g. hand crews, helitack crews, veterans, dispatchers, etc.).
- 2) Non-Fire Request
 - BLM requests for CISM support for non-fire incidents must be authorized by the State Director and routed to the Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation. The BLM's National CISM Coordinator shall work directly with the unit affected to determine the most appropriate response and ensure the appropriate response is coordinated with necessary resources. Use of the coordination system is not required for non-fire events.

National CISM Website

For information on the CISM program, please visit <https://www.nifc.gov/CISM/cism.html>. All content appropriate for employees and the public is located there; additional resources are available at the National Interagency Wildland Fire Critical Incident Stress Management website, <https://gacc.nifc.gov/cism/cism/index.html>. All content specific to CISM Program Management and CISM Team Members will be located on an internal firenet website, <https://sites.google.com/a/firenet.gov/cism/>. Permissions to the internal site will be managed by the respective agency national CISM coordinator.

Timeframe: The above qualifications of CISM and CISL will be required by January 1, 2021. All other above policies/actions are effective immediately.

Budget Impact: None

Background: None

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None

Coordination: This instruction memorandum has been coordinated with the BLM Fire and Aviation National Training Committee, NIFC External Affairs and BLM Fire Safety.

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