



Bureau of Land Management – Critical Incident Stress Management Program

CRITICAL INCIDENT PEER SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION AND MOBILIZATION PROCESS

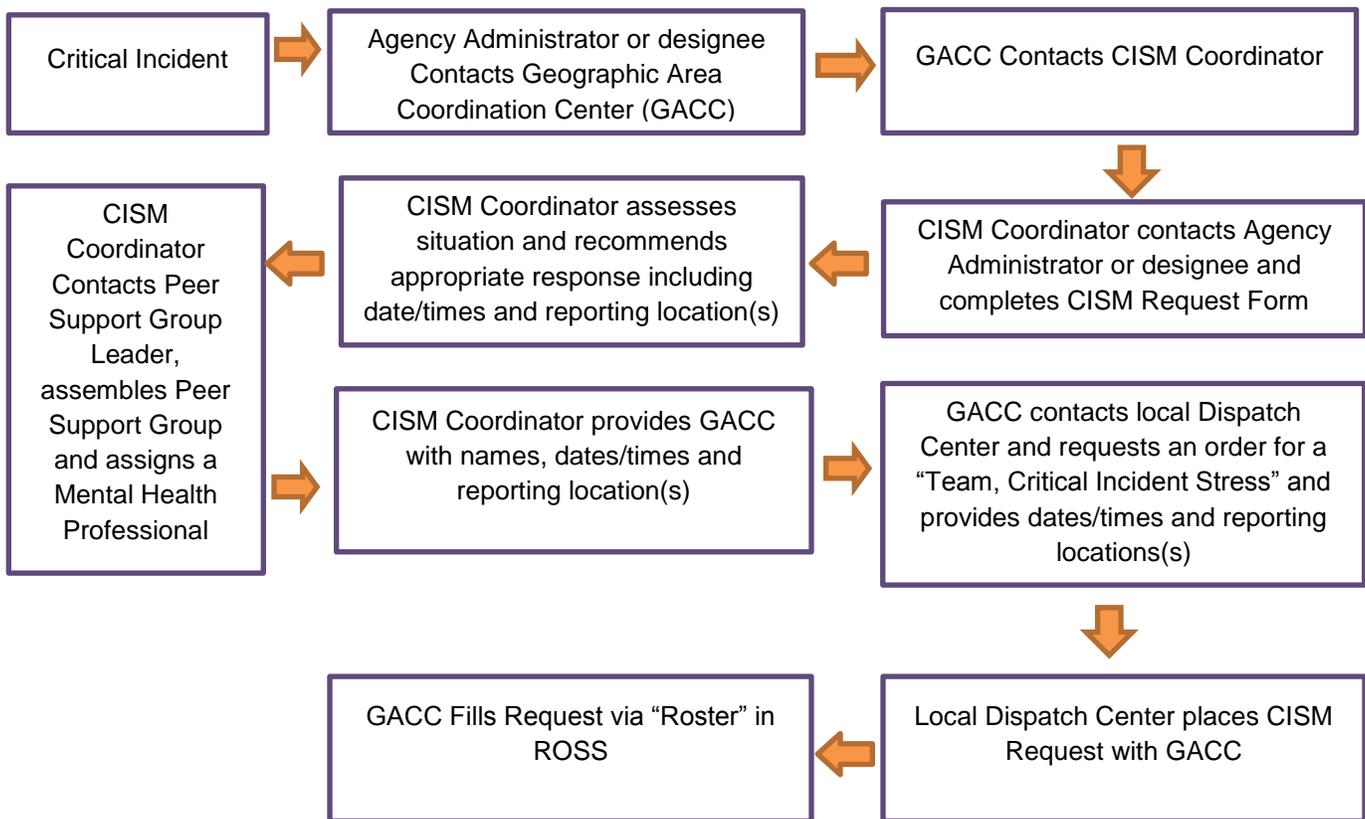
I. Requesting Support

Early psychological intervention should be based on recognition of need, not strictly the occurrence of an event. The BLM does not assemble or maintain “CISM Teams.” Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) Groups are not “on-call.” They are assembled at the time of request and will be comprised of personnel selected to match the backgrounds and experience of those involved in the critical incident (i.e. hotshots, helitack, engines, and dispatchers).

II. Timeline

One risk of crisis intervention is "premature intervention" which may interfere with the natural recovery mechanisms of some people. CISM processes generally start no sooner than 48-72 hours after an incident. It is important to allow time for affected individuals to disengage operationally, and re-connect with family or friends. Once this occurs individuals are typically emotionally ready to benefit from peer support.

III. Mobilization Responsibilities and Process



A. Agency Administrator

1. Identification of the Event

The Agency Administrator is responsible for identifying a critical event as a critical incident. The Agency Administrator is the highest ranking agency line officer with direct responsibility for the personnel involved in the incident.

2. Contact Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC)

The Agency Administrator or their designee should contact their Geographic Area Coordination Center who will provide contact information for the CISM Coordinator to discuss the need for CISM intervention and determine the appropriate support.

BLM States in Geographic Areas who are signatory to Coordinating Groups who charter a formal interagency CISM program utilizing the ICISF model may work directly with the CISM Coordinator for that Geographic Area (i.e, Southwest, Great Basin).

BLM States that do not have access to a formal interagency ICISF CISM program will make requests for CISM services through the National Critical Incident Stress Management Program Manager.

Generally, a Liaison will travel as soon as possible to the unit affected to gather facts, determine timelines and make an assessment of the individuals and groups that have been impacted. The Liaison will be a member of the Peer Group that' has been assigned.

B. Local Dispatch Center

1. Request Critical Incident Stress Management (Peer Support)

The local dispatch center on behalf of the Agency Administrator may be responsible for contacting the appropriate Great Basin Coordination Center to request CISM.

2. Resource Order

A resource order should not be placed until the CISM Coordinator has received information about the incident from the Agency Administrator or designee. The CISM Coordinator will assess the situation, determine the appropriate intervention strategy and determine dates, times and locations and assemble the CIPS Group. The CISM Coordinator will provide the information to appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center who will then request an order from the local unit. The GACC will fill the order via Roster in ROSS.

C. Geographic Area Coordination Center

1. Contact Critical Incident Stress Management Coordinator

The Geographic Area Coordination Centers are responsible for contacting the Critical Incident Stress Management Coordinator and providing contact information for the Agency Administrator or designee from the unit that is responsible for the incident.

2. Contact the Local Dispatch Center and ask them to Place a Resource Order

Once the CISM Coordinator has provided the GACC dates and times needed, and the reporting location (s) the GACC will pass the information to the local dispatch center and ask them to create an order for a "CISM Team" in ROSS and place it with the GACC.

D. Critical Incident Stress Management Coordinator

The Geographic Area CISM Coordinator is trained and certified crisis intervention specialist who has been certified by the ICISF and has been trained and certified in strategic response to crisis as well as other crisis intervention practices. The CISM Coordinator has been selected by the Geographic Area Coordinating Group to provide situational assessment for Agency

Administrators, Managers, and others to help determine the appropriate response. The CISM Coordinator will assist in determining the timing and type of support needed for the incident. Tactics are applied at the right time, in the right place and under the right circumstances. The CISM Coordinator will also provide a Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) Group which includes the expertise and screening requirements of a licensed Mental Health Professional (Clinician) who is experienced and trained in trauma.

CISM Coordinator:

- In consultation with the Agency Administrator determines the most appropriate crisis intervention strategy (CISM, EAP, etc.).
- If a CIPS Group is needed, identifies CIPS Group Leader, based on nature of the incident, affected personnel, time frames and availability.
- Determines the number and type of peer supporters to respond with the CIPS Group.
- Maintains a roster of licensed and qualified trauma specialists (clinicians).
- Maintains an active roster of trained and qualified group leaders and peer supporters.
- Coordinates with CRP Response Leader or Serious Accident Investigation Leader and assigns a CISM Liaison if necessary.

When a CISM Coordinator is not available a trained and certified Critical Incident Peer Support Group Leader may be assigned as the Coordinator.

E. Critical Incident Peer Support Group Leader

A Peer Support Group Leader is a highly respected and trusted person from aspects of fire programs (dispatchers, engine crew members, hotshot and other crews, helitack, smokejumpers, and many other specialties). A Group Leader has participated in numerous assignments as a Peer Supporter, completed required training for certification and has had enough exposure to various incidents and contact to have the ability to bring “order to chaos” found after a critical incident.

Critical Incident Peer Support Group Leader

- Will oversee the implementation of the elements of the established program. These are defined in scope as what is appropriate along with the laws of ethical behavior, while staying within the limits of their training and experiences and scope of practice.
- Required to keep confidences, be committed to the program while adhering to established limits and protocols. Staying aware of their boundaries and seeking guidance and assistance when appropriate.
- As Leaders, they are held to a high standard and must demonstrate respect and integrity for what crisis intervention is and what it is not.
- A Group Leader has participated in numerous assignments as a Peer Supporter and has had enough exposure to various incidents and contacts they are able bring “order to chaos” found after a critical incident. A Peer Support Group Leader is expected to navigate the “sea of good intentions,” without drowning.
- CIPS Group Leaders also:
 - Function as the liaison between the local unit and the peer support group.
 - Provide the team members with reporting times, lodging and meeting locations.

Peer Support Group Leader Roles and Responsibilities Continued:

- Coordinate with MHP's in determining the appropriate crisis intervention tactics to be applied with specific individuals and groups.
- Briefing the MHP as to what our expectations are for the meetings and travel.
- Allocate peer supporters based on background and culture.
- Coordinate with the group(s) daily when the groups are in multiple locations.
- Incident Business Management duties such as approving time, monitoring work/rest, and driving hours.
- Keep the coordinator informed as to the status of the assignment via daily call (s).
- Demobilization of resources and providing travel information Coordinator/Point of Contact, and dispatch center.

F. Peer Supporter

A peer is an individual with a professional history, often having historic recognition for background and experience within the "culture" of the wildland fire community who has a willingness to assist others in times of crisis. Peers come from all different aspects of the wildland fire community; dispatch, aviation, direct suppression crews or modules, engines and fire and aviation managers. The best peers are individuals who share the same backgrounds; i.e., engine personnel to engine personnel. A peer to a firefighter on a hotshot or veterans crew for example, would have substantial (and preferably current) experience on the fireline and within the hotshot/veterans crew community.

Peer Supporters:

- Assist the CIPS Group and MHP in providing Crisis Management Briefings, Defusing's, Debriefings, One-on-One Support and information sharing as directed.
- Assist the CIPS Group Leader and MHP in setting up and organizing formal meetings (location, seating, refreshments, assembling resource information and literature to be available at debriefings, etc.).
- Are self-sufficient (Travel Card or Credit Card).
- For peers of fireline personnel, they are required to have all of their required PPE to meet with affected personnel on the fireline, in spike camps and other remote locations.
- Prior to the arrival of the CIPS Group Leader they may be called on to initiate contact with local managers and staff to explain the peer support program, gather information and coordinate logistics.
- Prior to the arrival of the CIPS Group Leader they may be called to meet informally with those affected or involved with the critical incident

G. Mental Health Clinician (MHP)

Prior to any crisis intervention, the CIPS Group Leader and clinicians will meet and agree to the appropriate ICISF intervention techniques, format and the roles each will perform during the process. It is the responsibility of the Peer Supporters, through their crisis intervention presentations, to help the affected personnel get comfortable with the MHP and their role in the process.

Mental Health Professional, Continued

- The role of CIPS Group MHP is to provide affected individuals any information the clinician feels appropriate during and after the peer supporter's presentations.
- CIPS group clinicians address any issues which are outside of the Peer Supporters training and established boundary of competence.
- The MHPs are free to apply their expertise, as they deem necessary.
- When there is a need for the MHP's role to expand (Defusings/Debriefings) the peer supporters' role will change to one of support as the MHP directs the intervention toward the information they feel is essential. The BLM requires an MHP during Defusings/Debriefings.
- Do to the ad hoc nature and extremely vast, very rural, areas protected by our land management agencies MHP should factor in the limited availability of any follow up care (EAP) that is offered.