



Southwest Area Critical Incident Stress Management Roles & Responsibilities

Responsibilities

The guidelines below outline the general process of requesting Critical Incident Peer Support when individuals and/or units are involved in traumatic events.

A. Agency Administrator

1. Identification of Event

The Agency Administrator is responsible for identifying an 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. Request Critical Incident Peer Support

The Agency Administrator or designee is responsible for requesting Critical Incident Peer Support from the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) when a fire related incident occurs. SWCC will work with the Agency Administrator and designated Peer Group Leader to decide on the size and makeup of the group. This may require the Leader to travel to the affected unit and assess the situation and make recommendations. The timeliness of a request is imperative so the individuals involved are better prepared to start dealing with the thoughts, emotions, and impact of what just transpired. Critical Incident Peer Support is designed to help the individuals involved deal with the emotional after effects of a traumatic event.

The date and time of Critical Incident Peer Support will be decided in conjunction with the CISM Coordinator and Peer Group Leader. Generally the process will take place within 24-72 hours after an incident.

3. Provide Information

The Agency Administrator or designee is responsible for providing the CISM Coordinator with information about the incident. The Agency Administrator is responsible for providing the local dispatch center with a budget code for expenses associated with Peer Group response (and Mental Health Professional, if applicable).

B. Local Dispatch Center

1. Request Critical Incident Peer Support

The local dispatch, on behalf of the Agency Administrator, may be responsible for contacting the Southwest Coordination Center.

C. Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC)/Peer Group Leader

1. Peer Group Leader Identification

The Southwest Coordination Center is responsible for identifying and contacting the Leader and to request services within one hour after receiving a request. Once the request is made, the Leader will contact the Agency Administrator or designee.

2. Assess Type of Response

The Leader and SWCC will work with the Agency Administrator in assessing the needs of the affected individuals and determining the appropriate CISM intervention(s) to be used. This is also usually done with consultation with a mental health care professional.

3. Provide Information to the Local Dispatch Center

The Leader will work with SWCC in identifying names of individuals to be ordered. SWCC will generate a support order so that the affected dispatch center is not impacted. Individuals will be ordered as THSP- Critical Incident Peer Support. This information will be passed to the local center.

4. Advocates/COOP Staffing

SWCC may also provide recommendations to the local unit for pre-CISM or advocacy assistance. SWCC will also notify NICC, other GACCs, or local dispatch centers of the possibility of name requests for support personnel. The Agency Administrator or Peer Group Leader may also make these recommendations. This includes monitoring of “trigger points” which helps determine the need for advocacy or a pre-CISM response as identified below. The intent is not to overstep our involvement but to relieve managers affected who are not able to cover everything. Of most importance is the response of additional support and being there to assist our own.

Advocacy Roles

Peers that can immediately respond to assist those affected by an incident either on their own or by request are a vital role in providing support when an individual or their unit becomes quickly overwhelmed. Examples of types of support and assistance that can be provided include:

- Family Liaisons
It is of critical importance that Family Liaisons of injured individuals get identified and established early-on. This typically is done in conjunction with the affected unit. As the information flow gets established, these liaisons can assist with keeping the family informed of a wealth of information and will be a conduit back and forth between the agency and family.
- Phone Calls
Offices and individual personnel are inundated with phone calls from investigators, supporters, and others looking for information. It is important to have people available to screen these calls and cover requests so that those directly involved are able to focus on the immediate tasks at hand.
- Investigation Teams /Requests For Information
Often, investigation teams are involved and they request information from the unit affected. Much of the time emergency operations are still being conducted. It is beneficial to assign a liaison or point of contact for teams to coordinate with rather than inundate an office, crew base, aviation base directly with requests which overload phone and computer systems.
- Continuation of Operations (Staff Replacements)
Dispatch Centers, Fire and Aviation Managers, Air Bases, etc. may need relief for staff members who have been affected. Operations must continue for day-to-day work and immediate action must be taken to replace staff. Often those affected are too busy to deal with it or consider staffing needs and appreciate it being done for them.
- Media and Press Involvement
Calls and visits from the press are immediate. Assigning Public Information Officers and the establishment of information centers should be another immediate consideration.
- Logistics Support

Investigation teams, PIO's, families, local/state/regional/national personnel involved at the unit require space and phones. Advocates assisting a unit are able to arrange for conference room space (off the base/dispatch/office affected) so that operations can continue. Families may want a place nearby to meet and wait for information updates and should be away from investigations, teams etc.

- Medical Assistance

Hospital visits and/or providing transportation to those who have been injured for follow up doctor visits, physical therapy, etc. may also be required based on an individual's situation. Peers who are able to provide this support are valuable.

5. Maintaining the Roster

SWCC is responsible for maintaining an on-call roster for all members. Peer Group Members should notify SWCC of any changes of their availability status.