



## LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

**NUMBER:** 1155  
**TOPIC:** CRITICAL INCIDENT EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE  
**ISSUED BY:** TERESA EWINS CHIEF OF POLICE  
**DATE:** 1-1-2023  
**SUPERSEDES:** G.O. 1155, 2022  
**REFERENCE:**

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### I. POLICY

A critical incident is a situation in which an employee is exposed to serious injury or threat, severe stress, or events of a shocking nature. The Lincoln Police Department will provide immediate professional intervention after critical incidents to minimize stress-related trauma. (4.2.3, 22.1.4, 22.1.5)

### II. PROCEDURE

#### A. Officer Involved Shootings and Use of Force or Control Incidents

1. These procedures will be followed when an officer is involved in: (22.1.5)
  - a. A shooting resulting in serious injury or death;
  - b. Other use of control which results in serious injury or death;
  - c. Department operations resulting in serious injury or death.
2. The duty commander will report immediately to the scene.
3. The chief of police or a representative will report to the scene.
4. The duty commander will assign a peer support officer to the incident. (22.1.4)
5. The involved officer will be separated from the scene at the direction of the first arriving supervisor.
6. The officer will be afforded time to contact their personal attorney.
7. The officer involved in a critical incident may select a support officer, and the duty commander will contact them for assistance.
8. The support officer's role is to assist the involved officer. They will not be involved in the investigation and should not question the officer about the case or discuss the details of the incident with the involved officer. The support officer shall complete an ACI report stating they were selected as the support officer.
9. The officer shall also be advised of the availability of a chaplain.
10. If the officer's weapon is taken for evidentiary purposes, a replacement shall be provided immediately, unless the officer's emotional condition dictates otherwise, or a criminal offense appears to have been committed by the officer. The weapon should be removed as soon as practical, in private.
11. Names will not be divulged to the media, pending an official information release by the chief of police. Every effort will be made to delay release of the officer's name for 24 hours.
12. The officer will not be permitted to contact the victim or victim's family, nor to visit a victim's hospital room, morgue, or autopsy unless directed by the chief of police.
13. Following the initial investigation, the officer will be provided the opportunity to consult family, clergy, or care for personal needs.
14. The chief of police will meet individually with the officers involved within 24 hours. The purpose of this administrative meeting is not to investigate the case, but rather to advise the officer of their duty status, assess the need for employee assistance, and resolve other internal personnel matters.
15. The chief of police will order a critical incident stress debriefing.
16. The chief of police may temporarily reassign an officer involved in a critical incident.
  - a. Paid administrative leave is optional at the discretion of the chief of police in cases of non-lethal injuries.
  - b. Paid leave is mandatory, pending administrative review, when death or serious bodily harm results from police action. (4.2.3)
  - c. The chief of police will determine the duration of leave.

## B. Critical Incident Employee Notification

1. In the event of certain serious events and to ensure that accurate, factual information is disseminated, the Lincoln Police Department has established a calling tree. It will be implemented upon approval of the chief or their designate. This includes on and off duty employees. Incidents requiring employee notification may include:
  - a. Officers killed in the line of duty;
  - b. On duty life threatening bodily injury;
  - c. If an officer is shot;
  - d. Unexpected death of any department employee;
  - e. Any other incident as to be determined by the chief of police.
2. Duty commanders will ensure all unit managers are contacted.
  - a. If necessary, peer support officers and/or Emergency Communications Center supervisors can assist in any part of this process.
  - b. If any unit manager is absent, the senior supervisor of the team/unit will be contacted.
  - c. Unit managers will notify each supervisor within their unit.
  - d. Every supervisor will attempt notification with each employee.
  - e. An email will be initiated to all department employees by the chief or their designate.
3. Notification can be made in person or by telephone and leaving a message is appropriate. An attempt is sufficient when actual notification is unsuccessful. A supervisor can assign a designate to assist with making the notification.

## C. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (4.2.3, 22.1.4)

1. A critical incident stress debriefing is a group meeting involving the personnel involved in a critical incident, department peer support officers, and staff from the employee assistance program.
2. The purpose of the debriefing is to assist employees in dealing with the psychological and emotional impact of traumatic incidents. The debriefing provides a forum in which personnel can discuss feelings and reactions and thus reduce stress.
3. Critical incident stress debriefing is not a critique. Performance issues will not be discussed during the debriefing unless employees at the debriefing are having difficulties with their own performance.
4. All debriefing discussions will be strictly confidential.
5. Several types of debriefings may be conducted depending upon the circumstances of a particular incident. These may be one-on-one or in small groups of no more than 25. The following types of debriefings, singularly or in combination, are most common:
  - a. Initial Defusing: Conducted shortly after the incident. Primarily an informational update and status report on the incident and related injuries. A brief review of stress-related symptoms will be provided by a professional counselor.
  - b. Formal Debriefing Meetings: Conducted within 72 hours of the incident. Confidential non-evaluational discussion of involvement, thoughts, and feelings resulting from the incident. Also, discussion of possible stress-related symptoms.
  - c. Follow-Up Debriefing: Conducted weeks or months after the incident to deal with delayed or prolonged stress symptoms.
  - d. Individual Consultation: One-on-one counseling for any concerns related to the incident made available as needed.

## D. Initiation of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

1. The department will provide debriefings to employees involved in:
  - a. Shootings and use of force or control incidents described previously.
  - b. Other traumatic incidents, such as:
    - (1) Serious injury or death of an officer or other emergency personnel on the job, or exceptionally "close calls;"
    - (2) Employee actions resulting in serious injury or death of a community member.
    - (3) Disasters involving multiple deaths and injuries;
    - (4) Suicide of a department employee;
    - (5) Incidents involving police officers taken as hostages;
    - (6) Death of a child or serious violence to a child;

- (7) Incidents that attract extremely critical media coverage;
- (8) Any other incident charged with extreme emotion.
- 2. Commanding officers or designee are responsible for identifying significant incidents qualifying for debriefing, including incidents in which a critical incident stress debriefing is:
  - a. Required by the previous provisions of this General Order;
  - b. Warranted, in the opinion of the commanding officer;  
Suggested by those involved in the incident, and supervisors.
- 3. Any employee may also request a debriefing.
  - a. All requests will be made to, a supervisor or a Peer Support Officer.
  - b. All requests should be documented by a supervisor or Peer Support member, at the earliest convenience, and forward through the Chain of Command.
  - c. Any employee may contact the EAP or the FRF for individual assistance.
- 4. The peer support officer will schedule the debriefing within 72 hours and will notify employees, EAP staff, and the legal advisor.
- 5. All employees involved directly in the incident are approved to attend.

#### E. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Procedures

- 1. Location
  - a. Debriefings may be conducted anywhere that provides ample space, privacy, and freedom from distractions.
  - b. Participants will be out-of-service and radios off.
- 2. Debriefing Team
  - a. The debriefing team will consist of professionals in stress-related counseling and department peer support officers.
  - b. The peer support officers role in the debriefing process is to assist and support the professional counselors.
  - c. No recordings or notes shall be taken by the debriefing team or those attending.
- 3. The peer support officer may notify the family of the involved employee of EAP and FRF services which are available to family members. (4.2.3)

#### F. Relieving Personnel from Duty

- 1. Peer support officers may recommend that employees go out-of-service temporarily. This may include allowing employees to determine for themselves when they are ready to return to service during the shift.
- 2. The employee may decide that they cannot return to duty. The duty commander will be responsible for making appropriate arrangements.

