

<p><b>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</b></p>  <p><b>Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole</b></p>	<p><b>Volume III Chapter 1</b></p> <p><b>Procedure 1.03.02</b></p>	<p><b>Date Revised: Replaces 11.4 Issued 6/21/02 1.3 Issued 4/01/03 1.03.01, 12/12/07 1/25/08, 1.03.02-01 12/31/15</b></p>
<p><b>Chapter Title GENERAL, POLICY, ACCREDITATION</b></p>		<p><b>Date of Issue 9/28/12</b></p>
<p><b>Subject CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM</b></p>		<p><b>Effective Date 10/12/12 PUBLIC</b></p>

**I. AUTHORITY**

The Chairman of the Board is granted the authority to “Direct the operations, management and administration of the Board” and to “Perform all the duties and functions of chairperson, including organizing, staffing, controlling, directing and administering the work of the staff.” 61 Pa.C.S. § 6112 (a) (1) & (a) (4).

**II. PURPOSE**

The Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole recognizes that personnel, in the course of their assigned duties, may encounter incidents that result in varying degrees of emotional and psychological trauma. Unaddressed, critical incident stress can lead to serious problems which may affect the ability of personnel to function in a well-adjusted, productive manner. By understanding the effects of critical incident stress and employing the following Critical Incident policy and procedure, the agency will be taking an active part in restoring personnel to their non-traumatized state, and mitigating the harmful effects of critical incident stress.

**III. APPLICABILITY**

This procedure is applicable to all Board staff.

**IV. DEFINITIONS**

Affected Personnel: This designation is applied to any PBPP employee who was present at the scene of a critical incident and/or assisted or supported the personnel involved at a critical incident and/or exhibits an emotional response subsequent to a critical incident.

Chief Critical Incident Officer (CCIO): The PBPP Deputy Executive Director who ensures that the CIRT policy and procedures are followed and supported.

Confidentiality: The hallmark of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is confidentiality that must be fully maintained at all times. CIRT is obligated to ensure the confidentiality of all personnel, as well as their families. Any persons participating in a CIRT event must agree to not disclose any information shared by

any other participant during the session. Any personnel responding to a Critical Incident in accordance with this procedure, who has, in the course of their duty, acquired information from any personnel involved in the incident in confidence may not disclose that information unless (1) the communication indicates clear and present danger to the person who received peer support services or to other individuals; (2) the person who received peer support services gives express consent to the disclosure; (3) the person who received peer support services is deceased and the surviving spouse or the executor or administrator of the estate of the deceased person gives express consent; or (4) where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Critical Incident: Any situation faced by personnel in the course of their employment with the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole that causes them to experience unusually strong, negative emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function in a well-adjusted, productive manner.

Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT): Critical Incident Response Teams are Board staff (peers) selected and fully trained in crisis response and victimization support. The team is comprised of members representing the Eastern, Central, Western Regions as well as staff from Central Office.

Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) Coordinator: Person responsible, on behalf of the Deputy Executive Director and in coordination with each Regional Director or Board Secretary, for support of the critical incident response team.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Event: A small homogeneous group meeting that includes a Mental Health Professional, based on crisis intervention theory and educational intervention theory, designed to mitigate the psychological impact of a traumatic event, thus preventing the subsequent development of post traumatic stress disorder.

Critical Incident Stress Defusing Event: A small homogeneous group meeting based on crisis intervention theory and educational intervention theory, designed to mitigate the psychological impact of a traumatic event, thus preventing the subsequent development of post traumatic stress disorder.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing and Defusing (CISD) Process: The active, temporary, and supportive use of a structured, small group intervention process that focuses on building up a homogeneous group's resistance and resilience to traumatic stressors. CISD is not any form of psychotherapy or a substitute for psychotherapy or other professional counseling.

Critical Incident Stress Information Sheet: An information sheet that is made available as a takeaway handout for affected personnel at CIRT deployments, detailing various signs and symptoms of a stress reaction.

Defusing and Debriefing Log: A written record of the personnel conducting and participating in a Defusing or Debriefing intervention. Upon completion of a CIRT, this log will be filed with the CIRT Coordinator after being submitted to the Regional Critical Incident Officer by the lead deployed member. No confidential information is to be noted in the log.

Incident Commander: The person (generally the highest ranking in the chain-of-command) at the site of a critical incident who takes responsibility for the coordination of response efforts and all corresponding communication related to the response.

International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF): Organization which provides the principals of education, training, consultation and support services in comprehensive crisis intervention and disaster behavioral health services to the Critical Incident Stress Management Network. These principals and training are the foundation of Act 53 of 2009, Confidential Communications Involving Law Enforcement Officers.

Mental Health Professional: Trained individuals who have the specialized skill, professional experience, and willingness to participate in CIRT Debriefings and other follow-up CIRT events for the PBPP. To the extent possible, two Mental Health Professionals per District shall be identified as available to be called upon for CIRT deployments as the need arises.

Regional Critical Incident Officer (RCIO): As assigned and designated by their respective Regional Director or the Board Secretary for Central Office. The RCIO is responsible for the timely, efficient, and appropriate deployment of CIRT members in response to a critical incident within their jurisdiction and/or chain of command.

## V. POLICY

It is the policy of the Board to respond to all critical incidents in a timely and effective manner by arranging and providing confidential defusings and debriefings for affected personnel. Attendance at defusings and debriefings shall be required of affected personnel and appropriate follow-up directives may be mandated by the Deputy Executive Director, Regional Director or Board Secretary. All of the information shared within the context of CIRT deployments is confidential, with the exception of instances of clear and present danger to self or others. If such information is revealed it shall be immediately reported to the Deputy Executive Director, Regional Director or Board Secretary.

## VI. PROCEDURE

A. Critical incidents can include, but are not limited to, incidents which involve:

1. The use of deadly force either by or against personnel.
2. The line-of-duty death or injury of personnel.
3. The death or injury of civilians, including offenders, at an incident.
4. A catastrophe or mass disaster.
5. Sudden or unexpected death of a staff member

6. Any incident deemed critical by the Chairman, Deputy Executive Director, Board Secretary or respective Regional Director.
- B. Critical incidents are usually sudden, unexpected, and often cause common reactions by those who experience them, including:
1. Forcing a person to face vulnerability and mortality.
  2. Potentially overwhelming a person's ability to cope.
  3. Jeopardizing one's sense of self-control and disrupting one's beliefs and values.
  4. Affecting a person physically or emotionally or both.
- C. A critical incident requires activation and mobilization of a Critical Incident Response Team

1. CIRT Notification Requirements:

In an effort to meet the needs of affected personnel, it is the duty of all PBPP staff to ensure that any and all critical incidents are promptly reported through their chain of command to their respective Regional Director. Because life experiences and coping mechanisms vary among individuals, what may be a critical incident for one person may not be for another person. Directors, Managers and Supervisors who are unclear as to whether an event constitutes a critical incident shall immediately contact their Regional Director for guidance.

2. CIRT Process Duties and Responsibilities:

- a. Regional Director / Board Secretary and CIRT Coordinator

Ensures timely and accurate communication with all CIRT members. Responsible for site selection and logistical arrangements of training events. Updates forms and retains records as required. May be called upon to provide on-site support for CIRT deployments.

- 1) Upon being notified and after obtaining a full briefing of the critical incident, assess the need for CIRT deployment in accordance with protocol. Notify the Deputy Executive Director of the critical incident and provide ongoing updates on CIRT processes as appropriate.
- 2) Determine the type of deployment, scope of affected personnel, and preliminarily make logistical arrangements for the CIRT event.
- 3) Contact CIRT members, to include a Mental Health Professional for debriefing event, for response, taking into account the nature of critical incident, scope of affected personnel, and other logistical concerns. Confirm CIRT members' availability to respond.
- 4) Finalize arrangements for deployment and make sure that the appropriate on-location chain of command have properly notified and

directed affected personnel to attend the CIRT event.

- 5) Ensure that all operational needs and logistical support of CIRT members and affected personnel are met.
- 6) Should a critical incident happen within a DOC facility and it is determined that a CIRT deployment should occur within an SCI, the Regional Director shall coordinate with DOC/PBPP institutional personnel to ensure that responding CIRT members can access, have gate clearance to the SCI and have an appropriate space reserved for deployment.
- 7) Follow-up with deployed CIRT members, offering them a debriefing event with a Mental Health Professional, if deemed necessary or requested.
- 8) Obtain completed CIRT Defusing/Debriefing Log from the lead CIRT member and forward it to the CIRT Coordinator for filing.

**b. CIRT Member**

All team members are selected through a prescribed interview and screening process based upon their skills, abilities and experiences. After receiving initial core ICISF training and being duly certified, CIRT members will minimally convene for semi-annual training on a state-wide basis and additional sessions as necessary. All training sessions shall be considered mandatory and will be scheduled with adequate advance notice, ensuring maximum participation by all CIRT members. In the event a CIRT member fails to attend two (2) consecutively scheduled trainings, an evaluation will be conducted and a determination made (for retention or dismissal) by the respective Regional Director or Board Secretary and Deputy Executive Director

- 1) Upon receiving a request for CIRT deployment, confirm availability and willingness to respond.
- 2) Plan and coordinate with other assigned CIRT member(s) prior to the event, arriving at least an hour prior to start time. Obtain information from the local chain-of-command regarding affected personnel. Decide who will serve as the lead CIRT member and finalize plans for meeting format, including room set-up and information distribution.
- 3) For those critical incidents in progress, the CIRT member shall be sent to the command post and will notify the Incident Commander that he/she is available to provide assistance and meet with affected personnel.
- 4) Conduct Defusing or Debriefing event in accordance with CIRT training and protocol, obtaining the commitment of all participants that everyone will comply with the expectations of confidentiality. Ensure that the limits of confidentiality are understood.

**3. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing and Defusing (CISD) Process**

CISD is conducted to address the emotional and psychological needs of affected personnel. The events of a CISD are highly confidential; therefore, only affected personnel may attend. Notes or records shall not be made by

any personnel present during the CISD, except that a record of attendance is prepared and retained by the CIRT Coordinator. At no time will information divulged at a CISD be requested by or provided to, any other Board personnel.

a. Critical Incident Stress Defusing

The Defusing group is facilitated by the CIRT team as soon as possible following the conclusion of a critical incident. The group is never conducted at the scene itself. The group should be held in a neutral environment free of distractions.

b. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

The Debriefing group is ideally facilitated between 48 and 72 hours after a traumatic event and is held at an accessible and confidential location.

4. The after action review and incident critique focus on the finding of fact.

- a. Ensure that follow-up needs of affected personnel are met by having adequate SEAP referral forms and approved informational material available at the conclusion of the CIRT event.
- b. Complete the details of the CIRT Defusing/Debriefing Log and forward to the respective Regional Director or Board Secretary.
- c. Follow-up with the participants in a CIRT event, generally via phone call, in a timely manner, asking how they are doing and inquiring if they need any further assistance.

## VII. SUSPENSION DURING AN EMERGENCY

Not applicable.

## VIII. RIGHTS UNDER THIS PROCEDURE

This procedure creates no rights under law.

## IX. RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PROCEDURE

- A. This procedure does not contain information that impacts the security of Board staff or parolees and may therefore be released to the public.
- B. This procedure is to be distributed to all Board staff.

## X. CROSS REFERENCES

- A. Statutes

1. Federal

None.

2. State

42 Pa. C.S.A. § 5950

42 Pa. C.S.A. § 5952

B. PBPP Policies

None.

C. American Correctional Association

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D. Management Directives

None.

E. Report of the Reentry Policy Council

None.