



# Virginia Department of State Police

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**General Order ADM 14.02**

**Administration of the  
Critical Incident Stress  
Management Program**

**Purpose: To describe procedures for administering the Critical Incident Stress Management Program.**

1. The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program has been established to minimize the effects caused by critical incidents and help employees cope effectively with reactions to these incidents. The CISM Program is also available for outside public safety agencies, upon request.
  - a. The mission of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team is to assist employees in effectively coping with reactions to critical incidents in order to achieve and maintain a healthy and effective workforce.
  - b. The mission of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team member is to provide confidential assistance to employees, their families, or their significant others in coping with reactions to critical incidents in a healthy and positive manner.
2. Operational procedures for the CISM Program are contained in OPR 7.00.
3. Definitions
  - a. CISM Coordinator – a position appointed by the Superintendent whose responsibilities include appointment, removal and deployment of CISM Team members. In addition, he/she shall establish minimum training guidelines, schedule required training/meetings and maintain CISM Team records and documentation.
  - b. CISM Team Leader – a CISM Team member designated to assist with the coordination of CISM training and operational activities of his/her regional CISM Team.
  - c. CISM Assistant Team Leader – one CISM Team member designated to assist the CISM Team leader with his/her duties and responsibilities. He/she shall be responsible for maintaining a current recall roster of all

CISM Team members, and notifying the CISM Coordinator of any changes.

- d. Mental Health Professional – a CISM trained licensed clinical social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist.
- e. Associate Member – a former employee of the Department, who left under favorable circumstances, such as retirement, job opportunity, health, etc., who was a trained and participating member of the CISM Team and who applies to continue as a member of the Team as a volunteer.

4. Basic Structure of CISM Team

- a. Each geographical division will provide a minimum of five sworn and two civilian members.
- b. The overall CISM Team will be subdivided into an Eastern Region Team and a Western Region Team. The CISM Coordinator will assign a Team Leader and an Assistant Team Leader to each region.
  - (1) The Eastern Region Team will be made up of members from Divisions 1, 2, 5 and 7.
  - (2) The Western Region Team will be made up of members from Divisions 3, 4 and 6.
- c. Each team shall have at its disposal at least one mental health professional.

5. Responsibilities

- a. The CISM Team Coordinator shall develop and implement training standards and minimum training requirements to include annual in-service and quarterly team meetings.
- b. The CISM Team Coordinator shall make available CISM Team member instructors to provide CISM training to Department employees as requested to include basic schools, all levels of in-service, and the supervisor leadership development course.
- c. The CISM Team Coordinator shall ensure:
  - (1) current rosters are disseminated to all area offices, and
  - (2) the team leaders' contact information is listed in the Department's telephone directories.

- d. The CISM Coordinator will conduct an annual review of the program and forward a report to the Superintendent.
  - e. Upon a CISM activation, a Team Leader or Assistant Team Leader shall respond or designate members of the Team to respond and coordinate the CISM activities while keeping the CISM Coordinator informed.
  - f. Team members will respond to incidents within or outside their respective areas as directed by the CISM Team Coordinator or their regional Team Leader.
6. Selection Criteria for Peer Debriefers (CISM Team Members)
- a. Assignment as a peer debriefer with the CISM Program shall be strictly voluntary. The debriefers should be selected in proportions from each Bureau as the pool of potential candidates permit.
  - b. The CISM Team Coordinator will coordinate the selection process for CISM team members.
    - (1) Requests to serve as a CISM Team member shall be in writing through the chain of command to the Superintendent.
    - (2) CISM Team members will be selected by a panel consisting of the CISM Team Coordinator, CISM Team leader, and one other CISM Team member.
  - c. Candidates should possess at least three years experience as a sworn law enforcement officer or as a civilian employee of the Department. Volunteer mental health professionals requesting to serve on the team must have related mental health counseling experience.
    - (1) Associate members must have served as a member of the CISM Team prior to leaving the Department and must have retired while in good standing or left the Department under circumstances deemed favorable for re-employment.
    - (2) Applications to become an associate member of the CISM Team will be reviewed by the CISM Coordinator and if the applicant's work record, training and experience indicate that the applicant would be a very strong asset to the Department and the Team, then the applicant will be allowed to interview for an associate member position in the same manner that employees interview.

- d. Candidates should possess a clear understanding of the program's purpose, objectives and guidelines.
- e. Candidates must have a positive reputation within the Department, among peers and supervisors; and be well adjusted in both their personal and professional environments.
- f. Candidates should have a sincere desire to assist their fellow employees and be willing to respect and maintain confidentiality.
- g. Candidates must be willing to respond to:
  - (1) emergency callouts;
  - (2) scheduled training; and
  - (3) requests for unforeseen services as directed by the CISM Coordinator or his/her designee.

7. General Provisions

- a. CISM Team members will not interfere with any on-going criminal or internal investigation.
- b. This policy is not to interfere in any way with the voluntary use of or referral to any other related programs or services.
- c. No notes or recordings or other records of information exposed during CISM activities will be made or maintained by CISM Team members.
- d. CISM Team members responding shall be considered on duty and on special assignment. If Department vehicles are not available for civilian/dispatcher employees, travel vouchers may be submitted for use of personal vehicles.
- e. The CISM Team Leaders, Assistant Team Leaders, associate members, volunteers and all CISM Team members shall serve at the pleasure of the CISM Coordinator and may be removed from their positions at any time without cause or warning by the CISM Coordinator.
- f. A CISM member may be removed from the program at any time following formal disciplinary action or for engaging in conduct that might be deemed detrimental to the Department or the credibility of the CISM Program.