**Appleton**

**Police Department**



Critical Incident

Employee Handbook

# Appleton Police Department Critical Incident

# Services and Protocol

The department recognizes that even though stress is inherent in policing, occasionally employees become involved in what has been described in our policy as a critical incident, which places them under emotional stress. All people react differently to stressful situations and no one response should be considered as the norm. No matter how much you prepared for this day, there will be concerns and questions you may have.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you and your loved ones information in assisting you with dealing with the aftermath of this incident. The Appleton Police Department values its employees and understands that every employee will deal with the emotions of an incident differently. This information is being provided to you and your families to let you know what you can expect in the upcoming days and weeks.

Critical incidents are typically sudden, powerful events, which fall outside the range of our ordinary human experiences. Because they happen so abruptly, they often have a strong emotional impact, even on an experienced, well-trained officer. In law enforcement, officers generally don’t have the luxury of fleeing in a life or death situation, when a threat is perceived, or the unthinkable is witnessed. We are trained, and have taken an oath, to sometimes run towards the danger, when most others would run away.

This handout is meant to assist the involved officers, their families, and other department employees in understanding and coping with a critical incident. Your support group extends beyond your immediate family, but your family members or significant others are encouraged to accompany you to your required meetings with the department’s mental health professional and avail themselves to the professional’s services.

Departments contracted mental health professional:

Paul Smith LCSW

Code – 3: 1311 S. Packerland Dr., Suite A7, De Pere WI

Ph. (262) 355-5800

ComPsych Guidance resources program

Ph. 844-393-4982

Outagamie County Peer Support Team Contact Information:

Lt. Polly Olson – 419-5178 or any PST member of your choice

Outagamie County PST 24-hour Hotline 858-8700

# At the time of the incident

* If you used your firearm you should holster it and not remove the magazine or reload your gun. If you used a rifle you can leave it at the scene if you dropped it or can turn it over as directed by the first responding supervisor.
* You will be asked to provide preliminary information to the first responding supervisor so they can follow through with their responsibilities and the best and most credible investigation can be done.
* Once the scene is secured and stabilized take a step back from the scene and gather your thoughts. Take mental notes of your surroundings, do some autogenic breathing, and slow yourself down. You have done your part; it is now up to others to do theirs.
* You will be allowed to have a companion officer called to be your partner through the remainder of the incident. This can be anyone not involved in the incident. They can respond to the scene or meet you at the station. This officer will help provide for physical needs, contact people you wish contacted, and support you.
* You will be given a ride from the scene by another officer or supervisor. **You will be allowed to personally notify your family of the incident if you wish. You will be asked to notify your family to make sure they have privacy settings on any social media they use and to tell family members and friends to not use social media as the media will be searching it for information.**
* You will be allowed to call other family members, as you see fit. If you want one of them to respond to the station to meet you that can be arranged through your companion officer.
* A Supervisor will be assigned to be your main point of contact during the investigation. They will be the liaison to you, providing updates and answering questions for you and your family.
* At the station your firearm, magazines, and possibly other equipment will be collected by the investigators. You will be provided with a replacement weapon immediately.
* At the department you will be given a quiet area to meet with your representatives, family, and any mental health support personnel. You can change out of your uniform for the remainder of the process.
* If the mental health professional was able to immediately respond you will have your first mandatory meeting with them (Education and Support Debriefing). This purpose of this session is to provide you with information and support.
* If a voluntary walk through was not done initially with investigators, you may be asked to go back to the scene to do this with the investigators. It will help you to start putting the pieces of the incident back together and it will help you recall the incident when you give your statement.
* If you agree to it, a blood draw will be completed by investigators.
* Who do you wish to be your point of contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Ph. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### After the incident

The following things will occur, generally in this order, after the incident:

#### Education and Support Defusing – w/in 24 hours

Immediately after or within 24 hours after the incident, if at all possible, you will be required to meet with the department’s mental health professional (MHP). The purpose of this meeting is to allow you the opportunity to meet with someone trained in the body’s response to critical incidents and allow you the chance to express your feelings if you wish. They will discuss with you some of the feelings you may have had and will educate you on some of the feelings that may occur in the future. Your family may come with you but the debriefing will be a private, individual meeting. Your family members can also meet with the health care professional at this time if they would like to discuss their feelings or if they have questions. This is no cost to you or your family.

#### Administrative Duty

You will be placed on administrative duty to allow you to develop the coping skills needed to help you deal with the impact of the incident and meet the other requirements that will be expected of you the next several days. The length of the assignment will be determined by the Chief, but you can expect to be back to work within 72 hours of the official interview. If you are unable to return to work at that point we will work with you and the MHP to arrange an appropriate time for your return. Research has shown that returning to work sooner than later is usually best for the Officer. You will not be rushed back to work, and when you return it will be on administrative duty. When you return to work on administrative duty you will be assigned to station duty. Everyone handles these incidents differently and it is our goal to work with you through this.

While on administrative duty you are encouraged to arrange time on shift with a firearms instructor to do some shooting. This is not for any training purpose but is to help you transition back into your patrol duties.

The time spent on administrative duty should not be construed as discipline or a finding of any fault. The Appleton Police Department has elected to place you on administrative duty to allow you and your family the time to begin the process of recovering from this highly emotional incident. Your pay, benefits, and any vacation or compensatory time are not affected.

Many of your co-workers will want to show their support as the incident is being investigated. It is your decision how you want to inform them of how you are doing, but you cannot discuss the incident with them while it is being investigated. You may decide to have your companion officer be your point of contact for your co-workers to avoid being overwhelmed by calls and questions from co-workers.

While on administrative assignment you are encouraged to contact the supervisor assigned as your point of contact with any questions related to the investigation. Please forward all questions and concerns to that individual to avoid and confusion or conflicting information.

#### Interview with Investigators

You will be asked to provide a statement to investigators. The decision to do so is yours. Absent extenuating circumstances, that statement will not occur prior to two sleep cycles after the incident, approximately 48 hours. The interview will take place in a private area of the department and you will be allowed to have a union representative and/or union attorney present, and/or a private attorney of your choice present during the interview.

#### Individual Debriefing while on Administrative Assignment

After your interview you will be required to meet with the MHP. It has been suggested that you consider inviting your spouse or significant other to attend the session with you as a support person. This may be very beneficial to your family.

#### Case Updates

The supervisor assigned as your liaison will provide whatever updates they can to you on the status of the investigation and when you can expect your firearm back. The investigation that is being done is being done as quickly and efficiently as possible. The investigation will be thorough and complete, and will eventually be released to the public. As some point, after you have notified your family members, the public will be provided with your name and some basic employment information. This is public record and must be released.

#### Administrative Review

There will be an administrative review of the incident. They will review the investigation and issue findings and make recommendations to the Chief. The Chief will determine the disposition at that time. There will not be an automatic internal affairs investigation, but the Chief may order one if he deems it necessary.

***Return to full duty status***

You will return to full duty status when determined by the Chief, after the conclusion of the incident investigation. When you return to full duty status your work assignment and any special requests to ride with a partner, etc.., will be accommodated as much as possible.

***District Attorney Review***

The final report will be forwarded to the District Attorney for their review and decision.

#### Follow-up Services

Follow up care is encouraged for all Officers, and their families, to the extent they are comfortable.

##### ***Six and 12 Month Meetings with MHP***

By policy, you will be mandated to meet with the department mental health professional at approximately six and twelve month mark after the incident. This is to check on how you are doing and to offer any other services to you and your family. These meetings are confidential and the department is only notified that you did attend the meeting. These meetings will be arranged by the Support Services Supervisor.

**Department Point of Contact**

**Your department point of contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone Number’s: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**