

## **Standard Operating Guidelines**

### **CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING (CISD)**

Guideline # 310.32

Date: 05/09N

#### **PURPOSE**

A Critical Incident is an event outside the range of usual human experience, which has the potential to easily overcome a person's normal ability to cope with stress. It may produce a negative psychological response in a person who was involved in or witnessed such an incident. The Jackson Township Fire District #3 recognizes the importance of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) and will offer the services as outlined below.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

1. It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander and/or the Chief's to insure that these guidelines are followed.
2. CISD Team will provide an organized approach to the management of stress responses for firefighters having been exposed to, or showing signs, of traumatic stress experienced in the line of duty.
3. Fire District personnel shall be alert to recognize and promptly report any incident or changes in behavior which may affect personnel.
4. Company Officers shall be responsible for immediately reporting any event, situation, or behavior which may require a Critical Incident Debriefing to a Chief.

#### **PROCEDURES**

A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) shall be initiated when a specific incident is identified as a critical stress related incident. Such incidents may include, but are not limited to the following

1. Serious injury or death of emergency workers in the line of duty
2. Mass casualty incidents
3. Suicide of coworker
4. Death of a child or violence to a child
5. Loss of life of a patient following extraordinary and prolonged expenditure of physical and emotional energy during rescue efforts
6. Incidents that attract extremely unusual and critical news media coverage
7. Any incidents that is charged with profound emotions
8. Any incident in which the circumstances were so unusual or the sights and sounds so distressing as to produce a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction

When an incident occurs, the Incident Commander will notify Reverend Daniel Shafer

## **TYPES OF DEBRIEFINGS**

- 1. On scene or near scene debriefing**
  - a. On site evaluation and the counseling by another member. Watch for acute reactions, provide support, and consultation, and be available to help resting personnel deal with stress reactions.
  - b. Initial defusing shall be conducted shortly after the incident. Purpose is primarily informational. If needed, a more intense debriefing shall be organized.
- 2. Formal debriefing**
  - a. Conducted within 24 to 48 hours of the incident.
  - b. Confidential non-evaluative discussion of involvement. Discussion of possible stress related symptoms.
- 3. Followup debriefing**
  - a. Conducted weeks or months after the incident.
  - b. Concerned with delaying or prolonged stress symptoms.
- 4. Individual consults**
  - a. One to one counseling for any concerns related to the incident. Requires are referral to a mental health professional.

## **DEBRIEFING PROCESS**

1. Emergency service personnel are responsible for identifying and recognizing significant incidents that may require debriefing. When an occurrence is identified as a “critical incident”, a request for debriefing will be made as soon as possible.
2. Debriefings are optimally conducted within 24-72hours of the incident, and should not generally extend beyond one week. A 24 hour normalizing period following the incident is recommended. If large numbers of individuals are involved, debriefing begins with those most involved with the incident.
3. Process considerations
  - a. A location should be selected for the debriefing that is free of distractions and represents a neutral environment, i.e. school, church or other meeting facility as opposed to a fire station.
  - b. All emergency personnel involved in the incident should be invited to the debriefing and encouraged to attend. This includes, but is not limited to, fire, law enforcement, dispatch, and EMS personnel.

---

Approved:

Approved:

Date:

Date:

District Chief

Company Chief