



NORTH MIAMI POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS AND SUPPORT 400.20

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Department's response and resources available to all personnel requiring mental health services for work-related, or other difficulties not directly associated with a member's job function, which may have an effect on his or her performance. The policy also addresses support measures relating to line-of-duty deaths or serious injury, and the reintegration needs of personnel subject to extended military deployment.

II. POLICY

The duties and responsibilities of the law enforcement profession are often emotionally demanding and difficult, and officers risk experiencing stress and related emotional difficulties. Emotional difficulties may have a negative impact on personnel performance, and, in extreme instances, may present a danger to the welfare and safety of officers, their families, the general public and fellow

officers. Therefore, it is the policy of this Department to provide all personnel with access to mental health services to help them preempt and resolve emotional difficulties and, under emergency conditions, to take those measures necessary in the provision of mental health services to ensure the well-being and safety of officers and the general public.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Department.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Critical Incident:** An incident that is unusual, violent, traumatic and involves a perceived threat to, or actual loss of, human life that may overwhelm an individual's normal coping mechanisms and cause extreme psychological distress.
- B. **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** A program overseen by the City to provide City employees and their dependents with services for a variety of personal or professional reasons.
- C. **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** A psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, rape or other violent personal assault. PTSD can occur in all people, in people of any ethnicity, nationality or culture, and any age (*American Psychiatric Association*).
- D. **Line-of-Duty Death:** The death of an active duty officer by felonious or accidental means during the course of performing police functions.
- E. **Next of Kin:** The closest relative of the deceased officer – for example, spouse, parents, siblings, or children.
- F. **Survivors:** Immediate family members of the deceased officer to include spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancée or significant other.
- G. **Serious Injury:** Any injury requiring admission into a medical facility. Injuries not included are those requiring treatment and release from a medical facility.
- H. **Language Clarification:**
 - Should: Indicates a general or expected action, absent a rational basis for failing to conform.
 - Shall or Will: Indicates a mandatory action.

V. ANNUAL WELLNESS COUNSELING

The North Miami Police Department recognizes the importance of its members' mental health and the benefits of providing employees with a continuum of prevention, to include early intervention, mental health wellness sessions, psycho-education and options for follow up care.

- A. On an annual basis, and as needed, in agreement with Blue Line Counseling, Inc., all officers and civilian employees who come in contact with the public will be scheduled to meet with a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) as follows:
1. The member will be notified of the date, time and location of the meeting.
 2. The meeting will take place at a location where there is no possibility for the recording of any conversation.
 3. The LMHC will only submit attendance records to the Department for compliance.
 4. All communication between the LMHC and the member will remain protected and confidential, unless disclosure is required by state or federal law.

VI. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The North Miami Police Department also recognizes the Employee Assistance Program's (EAP) role in providing confidential initial assessment and mental health referrals to employees and their family members.

A. EAP Contact Information:

1. EAP assistance is provided by the City through Mutual of Omaha, who provides confidential consultations and professional resources by telephone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at **(800) 316-2796**. During the call, employees can also arrange for an in-person consultation.
2. Employees may also visit www.mutualofomaha.com/eap to access resources on their own, such as articles relating to: tutorials and interactive tools.
 - Family and relationships
 - Emotional well-being

- Substance abuse and addiction
- Physical health
- Work and career
- Legal Assistance
- Financial wellness

B. Employee Referral Methods: There are several ways employees can be referred to EAP; that is, voluntary, supervisor recommended or supervisor directed:

1. Voluntary:

- a. Occurs when employees voluntarily approach EAP. The information shared by employees will be considered confidential and it cannot be released inside or outside the North Miami Police Department, without their written permission, unless the information is required to be disclosed by Florida law or federal law or court order.
- b. The North Miami Police Department will not initiate an investigation or complaint based on an employee's request for professional assistance. EAP participation will not preclude investigations and/or disciplinary actions from a related investigation or complaint.

2. Supervisor Referral:

- a. When there is observed and documented deteriorated job performance or unusual behavior exhibited by an employee, supervisors may advise the employee of the services available from EAP and encourage the employee to seek assistance on a voluntary basis.

3. Supervisor-Directed Referral:

- a. If the observed and documented actions of an employee indicate that professional assistance is warranted, the employee will be required to participate in assessment and treatment services as deemed appropriate.

VII. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

- A. A Critical Incident is an incident that is unusual, violent, traumatic and involves a perceived threat to, or actual loss of, human life that may overwhelm an individual's normal coping mechanisms and cause extreme psychological distress. These may include the following:
 - 1. Directly witnessing the death or serious injury of a minor, or participating in the physical treatment of an injured minor, who subsequently died before or upon arrival at the hospital.
 - 2. Directly witnessing an injury, or participating in the physical treatment of an injury, including an attempted suicide, to a person who subsequently died before or upon arrival at the hospital if the person was injured by grievous bodily harm.
 - 3. Directly witnessing a homicide, whether criminal or excusable.
 - 4. Officer-involved shootings.
 - a. All officers directly involved in a shooting incident shall be required to meet with psychological services, as designated by the Department, for counseling and evaluation. Refer to the Officer-Involved Shooting policy, 300.19, for further information on officer support during shooting incidents.
- B. At all times, when at the scene of an incident, the supervisor should interact with all involved personnel in a manner that acknowledges the potential stress caused by the incident and refrain from passing judgment regarding the critical incident or the reactions of individuals.
 - 1. Following a critical incident, supervisors must be cognizant that physical, cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioral reactions or difficulties may not arise immediately. In addition, involved personnel may attempt to hide their negative responses to the critical incident. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring the behaviors of personnel for any adverse reactions or symptoms.
- C. The Department shall provide personnel with the proper mental health resources when it is reasonable to believe that involved personnel may experience physical, cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioral reactions to a critical incident.

D. Counseling or psychological services can be obtained from:

1. EAP, as listed in Section VI.
2. North Miami Police Chaplains.
 - a. The current Chaplains' list is on PowerDMS for all Departmental Employees to access on their own.
 - b. The Chaplains' list will be kept current by the Community Oriented Policing Section Sergeant.
3. Depending on the severity of the incident, and at the discretion of the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, one of the following services may be sought:
 - a. The Miami-Dade Psychological Services may be contacted through a request made by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, directly to the Miami-Dade Police Department's Director's Office.
 - b. Blue Line Counseling, Inc., as listed in Section V., or any other LMHC approved by the Chief of Police.

VIII. LINE OF DUTY DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY

The following procedures should be adhered to in cases of line-of-duty deaths and in cases of seriously injured officers. These procedures should be followed whenever possible with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the Department.

A. Death Notification:

1. Notification to the individual(s) listed on the officer's emergency notification form (if available), or known next of kin, should be made as soon as possible by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.
2. The name of the deceased officer shall not be released to the media or other parties before survivors are notified. If the media has already obtained information related to the death, they should be asked to withhold the information until after the notifications have been completed.
3. Whenever possible, line-of-duty death notifications should be made in person by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, and another member of the Department, preferably an individual with personal

knowledge of the deceased officer and his or her family, such as a partner or close friend. Chaplains may be used as well.

4. Prior to contacting the next of kin, notifying officials shall do the following:
 - a. Gather and familiarize themselves with essential details of the death, location of the body, personal effects and other pertinent information.
 - b. Ensure that the deceased has been positively identified.
 - c. Gather readily available information concerning the survivors that may aid in the notification. This includes, but is not limited to, whether survivors are elderly, disabled, visually or hearing impaired, have medical conditions or do not speak English, in which case a translator or officer who speaks the particular language should be provided. If possible, officers should obtain the names of the survivor's closest relative, friend, family doctor, and clergyman.
 - d. Receive approval from the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.
5. Whenever the health of immediate survivors is a concern, emergency medical services personnel shall be requested to stand by.
6. Every reasonable effort shall be made to make the death notification in the privacy of the survivor's home or in another location away from public scrutiny.
7. Notifying officials should address the survivor(s) in a straightforward manner and use easy-to-understand language to briefly explain the circumstances of the incident and the fact that the individual is dead. Officials should not provide graphic aspects of the incident of the individual's death. Police jargon should be avoided.
8. Before leaving, the notifying officials shall provide the family with contact information for the Department member(s) who will assist them in the coming days, weeks, or months.
9. Officials should not leave a lone survivor unattended and will make all reasonable efforts to assist the survivor garner first-hand support from the survivor's family, friends, coworkers, neighbors,

family clergy, crisis counselors, or other community social service agency.

10. If the family is going to the hospital, notification officers shall inform the hospital liaison officer that the family is in route. In such cases, immediate transportation should be provided for survivors.
11. If necessary, arrangements for childcare or care for elderly relatives shall be made by notifying officers.

B. Assisting Survivors at the Hospital:

Whenever possible, the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall join the family at the hospital in order to emphasize the agency's support. An officer will be designated as the hospital liaison officer who shall:

1. Arrange for waiting facilities and security for immediate survivors. The desires of the surviving family members should be followed with regard to their accessibility to other officers and friends.
2. Designate a separate media staging area with assistance from the local law enforcement jurisdiction. The Department's Public Information Officer will be the primary point of contact.
3. Ensure that medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the officer's condition to the family before any other parties.
4. Assist family members, in accordance with their desires and hospital policy, in gaining access to the injured or deceased officer.
5. Take all personal effects of the deceased for return to the family at a later time.
6. Arrange transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital. As with notifications performed at the home, survivors should not be left unattended if their emotional stability is in question or where other assistance, such as the care of children or the elderly, is necessary.

C. Coordination Personnel:

The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall designate a Departmental member(s) to serve in the following capacities: Department Liaison, Funeral Liaison and Benefits Coordinator/Family Support Advocate to proceed as follows:

1. Department Liaison:

The Department Liaison officer shall serve as a facilitator between the family and the Department. This individual should normally be a commanding officer in order to expedite the tasks of employing Departmental resources and the delegation of assignments. This officer should work closely with the Funeral Liaison officer (described below) to ensure that the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a. Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements to include the Honor Guard, pallbearers, traffic control, and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies.
- b. Coordinating a response to the media with the Public Information Officer to include the following:
 - 1). Assisting family members in dealing with general media inquiries and informing them of limitations on what they can say to the media specifically.
 - 2). Providing liaison with the Department's Public Information Officer to include coordination of any statements and press conferences. The Department Liaison shall also ensure that members of the agency are aware of restrictions regarding release of any information that might undermine future legal proceedings.
- c. Ensuring that security checks of the survivor's residence are initiated immediately following the incident and for as long as necessary thereafter.
- d. Providing agency personnel with updated information regarding the incident as it becomes available.
- e. Preparing and disseminating the official Departmental bulletin regarding the officer's death, to include the following:
 - 1). The name of the deceased officer.
 - 2). Date and time of death.
 - 3). Summary of the incident.

- 4). Officer's duty assignment.
- 5). Funeral arrangements.
- 6). Uniform to be worn by attending officers.
- 7). Directions to funeral home or church.
- 8). Telephone contact for additional information.

2. Funeral Liaison:

The Funeral Liaison officer acts as a facilitator between the decedent officer's family and the Department during the wake and funeral. The Funeral Liaison officer is responsible for:

- a. Meeting with family members and explaining his or her responsibilities to them.
- b. Identifying alternative churches and reception halls that will accommodate the law enforcement funeral. These alternatives will be presented to the family, who will make the final determination.
- c. Being available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
- d. Ensuring that the needs and wishes of the family come before those of the Department.
- e. Assisting the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
- f. Determining the need for travel arrangements for family members and any other special needs of the family during the funeral and reporting this information to the Department Liaison.
- g. Briefing the family members on the procedures involved in the law enforcement funeral.
- h. Coordinating with the appropriate personnel to provide law enforcement specific funeral services (e.g., death watch, Honor Guard, etc.).

3. Benefits Coordinator/Family Support Advocate:

The Benefits Coordinator is responsible for:

- a. Filing workers' compensation claims and related paperwork.
- b. Presenting information on all benefits available to the family, to include EAP services.
- c. Advising the surviving family of the role of police associations and organizations and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.

- d. Providing contact with surviving family members in order to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings relating to the death of their family member.
- e. Accompanying surviving family members to criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings, and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as required.
- f. Maintaining routine contact with family members to provide companionship and emotional support and maintain an ongoing relationship between the Department and the immediate family.

D. Serious On-Duty Injury:

- 1. Absent the officer's ability to make notifications himself or herself, the officer's next of kin shall be notified of his or her serious injury by the on-duty Shift Commander, or his/her designee. The member making notification should be accompanied by at least one other individual, to include a close friend of the injured officer, the police chaplain, and/or other support personnel.
- 2. Depending on the nature and severity of the injury, and where applicable, the same notification procedures as outlined above in Section VIII, A, shall be followed.

E. Support for Coworkers:

The death or serious injury of a coworker in the line of duty can be one of the most traumatic events that an officer can experience. Following a line-of-duty death or serious injury, all officers shall be encouraged, or directed, if applicable, to participate in psychological or peer support services through the City's EAP program, or as designated by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.

IX. MILITARY DEPLOYMENT AND REINTEGRATION

The North Miami Police Department fully supports employees who are members of the National Guard and military reserves. The Department will ensure compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), F.S.S. Chapter 115.07, the City's Civil Service Rules, and the current union bargaining contract, which protect job rights and benefits for reserve and guard members.

- A. Upon returning from military leave, an employee will be reinstated at the same pay grade/step he or she earned prior to taking military leave, in addition to any cost of living increases that were granted during the leave.
- B. An employee may request, in writing to the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, adjustments to his or her work schedule for military weekend drills, or other short-term military assignments lasting less than 7 days. Such request shall be submitted at least fourteen (14) days prior to the drill date (if it is provided to the employee by the armed forces in time to comply with timeline).

C. Military Service Pre-Deployment:

Upon notification that an employee is being assigned to active military service for a period longer than six months (180 days), The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall meet with the employee and shall:

- 1. Designate a Department and Human Resources point of contact for the employee during his/her absence. The Department member will:
 - a. Arrange for the storage of any Department-issued equipment, to include Department-issued weapons.
 - b. To the extent possible, ensure a process for communication with the deployed member is established and will notify the employee during his or her absence of agency news, significant events, promotions, and promotion opportunities.

D. Military Service Return/Reintegration:

Upon returning to the Department, an employee assigned to active military service for a period longer than six months (180 days) shall:

- 1. Meet with the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, who shall appoint a Department member to ensure that:
 - a. The returning member is assigned to field training for a minimum of one week to reacquaint the employee with his/her job function.
 - b. Review all changes and additions to policy and procedures as documented in PowerDMS, and sign for any new policies.

- c. Ensure that the member's lethal and less-lethal weapons qualifications are current and obtain any missed initial and/or refresher training, as appropriate.
- d. Upon determining that the employee is sufficiently retrained, forward a memo through the chain of command to the Section Major releasing the employee to his/her assigned duties.

X. MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND TRAINING

Pursuant to F.S. 112.1815, all sworn officers, including Reserve Officers and School Security Officers, shall receive educational training related to mental health awareness, prevention, mitigation and treatment, to include PTSD.

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