

Texas Fire Chiefs Association
DOCUMENT SUBMISSION FORM

Candidate Department: **Irving Fire Department**

Best Practice Standard: 10.06 Critical Incident Stress Management

Proofs of Compliance Submitted:

1. GOP 13.2 Managing Stress Related Situations

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Evaluator's Review

Evaluator:

Date Accepted:

13.2 - MANAGING STRESS RELATED SITUATIONS

The Irving Fire Department (IFD) provides three (3) programs to help employees through emotional and stress related situations.

A. Employee Assistance Programs

1. The City has contracted with an outside agency to act as a source for employees to call upon for consultation in dealing with personal problems or stress-related situations. Examples of problems with which this resource deals are:
 - a. Family Conflicts: Child/parent and family member conflicts, teenage problems, family illnesses, divorces, marital conflicts, and dual career problems.
 - b. Emotional Strain: Depression, anxiety, eating disorders, death of a loved one, and legal and financial problems.
 - c. Work: Job stress and interpersonal problems.
 - d. Alcohol/Drug Abuse: Excessive drinking, prescription and drug abuse and family drug problems.
 - e. Referral Services: Help in identifying health and social services in your community such as Alcoholics Anonymous.
2. The program is confidential. The only exception relates to situations where an employee presents an imminent risk of self-destructive behavior or violent behavior to others.
3. For associated costs to the employee for this program contact Human Resources. Coverage includes the employee, spouse, and dependents, as individuals or as a group. A member may contact Human Resources for further information.

B. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

The IFD provides for assistance in the form of CISM when members have been subjected to serious stress in the performance of their duties. Department personnel are urged to report any such need, of their own or another member, the Chaplain, a Supervisor, a Battalion Chief, an Assistant Chief, or the Chief of Department when such is recognized. Such need may be prompted by involvement in, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Death of a child.

2. Multiple deaths.
3. A multiple-injury accident with several victims.
4. When a member of the IFD recognizes the need for CISM intervention for themselves or another IFD member.

C. Chaplain Program

It is the policy of the IFD that Chaplain Services will be made available to all individuals. The services of the Chaplain are available to all department members at anytime, day or night. However, participation is strictly voluntary and should be in no way considered required.

Purpose: To provide for the personal needs of the department personnel through the establishment of a Chaplain Program.

1. Appointment
 - a. Because of the major risks and constant stresses faced by Fire Department personnel in the line of duty, Chaplains will be appointed to function within the department.
 - b. The Irving Professional Firefighters Association will select a candidate for the position of Chaplain.
 - c. The Chaplain will be appointed by the Chief of Department.
 - d. If there is a reason that the Fire Chief cannot appoint the candidate selected by the Irving Professional Firefighters Association, then the Fire Chief will meet with representatives of the Association and resolve this conflict so that a suitable appointment can be made.
 - e. After appointment, the Chaplain will be issued the following equipment:
 - 1) A Class A uniform.
 - 2) A Chaplain's badge.
 - 3) A cell phone, at the discretion of the department.
 - 4) Chaplain's business cards.

2. Qualifications and Training

- a. The individual appointed to the position of Chaplain will volunteer from current membership that are willing to serve as Chaplain in addition to their current assignment.
- b. In the event that a suitable candidate cannot be obtained from within the current membership of the department, the Chaplain may be selected from retired members of the department.
- c. If a suitable candidate cannot be obtained from current or retired members of the department, a citizen of Irving will then be selected.
- d. In addition, the individual that is appointed to the position of Chaplain must:
 - 1) Be willing to serve in a crisis.
 - 2) Be willing to commit the time necessary without neglecting his/her regular position within the department.
 - 3) Be in good physical health.
 - 4) Abide by the established Rules and Regulations, Emergency Operating Guidelines, and Policies and Procedures of the Irving Fire Department.
- e. The individual appointed to Chaplain is preferred to:
 - 1) Be an ordained member of the clergy.
 - 2) On appointment, become a member of the Federation of Fire Chaplains.
- f. The individual appointed to Chaplain shall be required to participate in appropriate training for this position. Some examples include:
 - 1) Critical Incident Management Training (through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation).
 - 2) Annual Federation of Fire Chaplains Training Conference.

- 3) Line of Duty Death Courses offered by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the State Fire Marshal's Office.
 - 4) Courses deemed appropriate by the Fire Chief.
3. Duties of the Chaplain: The below listed duties constitute a brief summary of what may actually be required in any situation that may be encountered. The Chaplain must remain constantly alert and sensitive to needs and the means he/she must employ to meet those needs.
- a. Emergency Situations: The Chaplain will respond when requested by Fire Department personnel, or at his own discretion, (with approval from the Battalion Chief or the Immediate Supervisor, whichever is most appropriate, when on duty), and will report at the scene to the Incident Commander (IC). When at the scene, the Chaplain will be under the command authority of the IC.
 - 1) While on the scene in the capacity of Chaplain, the Chaplain will perform the duties of a Chaplain as determined by the IC. These duties may be directed to department personnel or to civilians, and may include:
 - a) Comfort and counsel.
 - b) Provide appropriate victim assistance to free operational personnel for other operational duties.
 - c) Referral to appropriate community agencies for assistance.
 - d) Help in contacting family members.
 - e) Find a victim's religious preference or church affiliation and attempt to notify the victim's pastor or church.
 - 2) The Chaplain may respond to the hospital when the IC determines:
 - a) A member of the department is the victim.
 - b) The victim or family may need support or counsel.
 - c) The victim's family may need to be located and notified.

- 3) The Chaplain may respond to a member of the Fire Department's home:
 - a) In the event that a member of the department is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, the Chaplain, the Chief of Department and/or an Assistant Chief shall drive to the appropriate location to make a face-to-face notification to the appropriate family member(s) and assist the member's family with transportation to the hospital.
 - b) If a member of the department becomes seriously ill or has some sudden medical emergency while on duty, the Chaplain should go to the appropriate location and notify the appropriate family member(s).
 - c) If a member's immediate family, (spouse, children, parents), has a serious illness or dies while the member is on duty, it may be appropriate for the Chaplain to assist the member to the appropriate medical facility (depending upon the seriousness of the event and the state of mind of the member of the Fire Department).
 - d) Post-Emergency duties will be limited and coordinated with Immediate Supervisor(s) if time away from regular position is necessary.
- 4) Conduct follow-up to insure members are receiving necessary assistance in the area of Critical Incident Stress Management.
- 5) Determine if a member's needs are being met with regards to on-the-job injuries (if necessary assist with departmental paperwork etc.).
- 6) Determine if a member's family's needs are being met with regards to Line of Duty Death benefits.
- 7) If appropriate, follow up to insure victims are receiving necessary assistance.

b. Routine Duties:

- 1) Duties within the department: While it is desirable for the Chaplain to perform all these duties, it is recognized that this may not be possible due to the Chaplain's regular duty assignments.
 - a) Visit all stations and shifts.
 - b) Visit hospitalized department members, members of their families, and retirees.
 - c) Instruct department personnel in appropriate subjects as directed by the Training Division.
 - d) Be available for helping or counseling members of the department in times of stress or difficulty, as they request (can be personal or work related).
 - e) Attend department functions.
 - f) Conduct weddings and funeral/memorial services as needed and requested.
 - g) Be a member of the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team.
 - h) Be subject to call on a twenty-four (24) hour basis.
 - i) Provide information regarding benefits available to members and their family members.
 - j) Assist with state and federal benefits information for families of members injured/killed in the line of duty.
 - k) Any other duties deemed appropriate by the Chief of Department.
- 2) Duties outside the Department:
 - a) Assist and/or represent the department when requested at City events or other public events.
 - b) Be a liaison between the department and assistance groups within the community.

- c) Be a liaison between the department and religious institutions and churches in the community.
- d) There may be times when the Chaplain is asked to assist with emergencies, disasters, or Line of Duty Deaths within the county, state, and nation. The Chaplain shall coordinate these activities with the Chief of the Department or his designee.

3) General Guidelines for the Chaplain:

The Chaplain does not replace a parish priest or home church pastor, but seeks to support the concern of every church for its members who are fire fighters and have special needs. Moreover, the Chaplain must strive for the advantage of every member of the department, regardless of his/her nationality, race, sex, age or religion.

- a) Any communications a person makes to the Chaplain is on a strictly confidential basis, (in accordance with clergy privilege and HIPPA), and will not be released to department members or any other person. Any member of the department may communicate directly with the Chaplain without having to notify his/her Supervisor. The Chaplain will practice professional ethics and respect the member's right to privacy.
- b) Any member of the department who is made aware of any situation which may need the response of the Chaplain is encouraged to notify the Chaplain immediately either directly or through the Alarm Office.
- c) In the event the Chaplain is on duty at the time of the emergency, the Chaplain shall be relieved of duty (unless the Chaplain is out on a call).
- d) The Chaplain, under the authority of the Chief of Department shall be able to relieve a member of duty. This shall be done in cooperation with an Assistant Chief and/or the member's Supervisor, (i.e. Battalion Chief, Alarm Office Battalion Chief, etc.). The Chaplain shall meet with the Chief of the Department to confirm reasons for relieving a member of duty.