

## PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures for obtaining assessment, crisis intervention, psychological assistance and counseling services for members of the North Little Rock Police Department.

**Policy:** The policy of the department is to provide access to short term, individual and family counseling for alcohol, drug, financial, legal, family, stress, health and work related problems to all members of the department and to assist employees exhibiting below standard, unusual or less than professional job performance attributable to trauma or personal stress rather than negligence, lack of knowledge or illegal behavior. Due to the need to avoid harm to themselves, fellow employees or the general public and because of the scope of responsibility and consequence of error for positions in the department, psychological fitness must be maintained at all times. [CALEA 22.1.7a]

#### Summary of Changes:

##### Definitions:

**Critical Incident:** Any situation that could likely cause a strong emotional reaction that can potentially interfere with an individual's or group's ability to function immediately after an incident or at a later time.

**Concerned Referral:** Supervisor initiated referral to service provider where members voluntarily submit to a session.

**Fitness for Duty:** Mandated referral to determine physical, mental and emotional capacity to perform the essential functions of the job.

##### Procedure:

#### 1. Identification of Member Needing Assistance

- 1.1 Job behaviors which may lead a supervisor or commander to conclude that an individual requires mental health assistance including, but not limited to the following:
  - 1.1.1 A series of sustained citizen complaints.
  - 1.1.2 Repeated complaints of the same nature.
  - 1.1.3 Abrupt change in response and/or behavior which may be continuous tardiness, absenteeism, sleeping during duty hours, excessive impatience, violent reaction to others, overeating, non-eating, poor personal appearance, smell of alcohol or physical symptoms of drug abuse.
  - 1.1.4 Patterns of unusually poor or rapidly declining work performance.
- 1.2 Supervisors shall receive training regarding the identification of member behavior that could impact work performance. [CALEA 22.1.7f]

#### 2. Referral Options:

- 2.1 Self-Referral: [CALEA 22.1.7b, d]
  - 2.1.1 All members and their immediate family will have access to assistance provided by the designated service provider.
  - 2.1.2 A member may contact the department authorized psychological services provider (listed in Section 7), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without notifying a supervisor. [CALEA 22.1.7c]
  - 2.1.3 Members and their family may receive short term counseling up to eight (8) visits per episode. If additional services are needed, an appropriate referral will be made. [CALEA 22.1.7c]
- 2.2 Concerned Referral: [CALEA 22.1.7b, d]
  - 2.2.1 The supervisor is responsible for monitoring an employee's daily performance behaviors. A supervisor may make a concerned referral to the designated service provider when issues or events arise which are affecting the officer's ability to perform at an acceptable level.
  - 2.2.2 The supervisor, while in consultation with the employee, should assist the employee in making an appointment with the service provider.

2.3 Formal Referral: [CALEA 22.1.7b, d, e]

- 2.3.1 *Fitness for Duty*: When a supervisor judges an employee may need psychological assistance, the supervisor will prepare a written report supporting the judgment and submit through the chain of command to the chief of police.
  - 2.3.1.1 If the chief of police concurs, the Professional Standards Unit will initiate the referral and assessment process with the department authorized psychological services provider.
  - 2.3.1.2 The chief of police and the supervisor will determine whether or not the employee should be removed from his/her position.
- 2.3.2 The chief of police may upon an employee's return to work from an extended illness or injury request a *Fitness for Duty* evaluation prior to the employee being placed on full duty status.
- 2.3.3 When an officer is involved in an incident resulting in death or serious injuries to one of the parties, the officer will attend a minimum of two sessions before returning to duty. Upon authorization, the Professional Standards Unit will initiate the referral and assessment process with the department authorized psychological services provider. The involved officer(s) will attend a follow-up session with the psychological service provider, within a 3-4 month period of their returning to duty. A subsequent annual session will also be conducted with the psychological service provider.

**3. Critical Incident Debriefings**

- 3.1 The chief of police and division commanders may request an on-site critical incident debriefing after an incident which may interfere with the individual's or group's ability to function after the incident or at a later time.
  - 3.1.1 The division commander or designee should contact the designated service provider to schedule.

**4. Pre-Promotion Screening:**

- 4.1 To ensure the department provides proper supervision and personnel practices consistent with the goals of the department, all candidates for promotion to supervisory positions will submit to psychological screening prior to advancing to a higher position of authority.
  - 4.1.1 The Professional Standards Unit will initiate the process upon notice from the chief of police.

**5. Private Physicians and/or Psychological Services**

- 5.1 Employees may consult with or receive treatment from their private physician or psychologist without notifying a supervisor. These services will be supported to the extent that the medical insurance allows.

**6. Job Security and Confidentiality:**

- 6.1 All records of contact between the member and psychological service will be considered strictly confidential and are filed by case number rather than by name. Information from these files can only be released with written permission of the member or family member receiving services. The following are exceptions to this privileged confidentiality: [CALEA 22.1.7c]
  - 6.1.1 Matters which involve serious violations of the law, or
  - 6.1.2 There is an indication the member presents an immediate physical danger to their self or others. In the event of such occurrences, the chief of police will be notified or action taken to ensure the protection of those concerned and the welfare of the department, or
  - 6.1.3 When the evaluation is the result of a formal referral for *Fitness for Duty*.
- 6.2 Job security and promotional opportunities will not be jeopardized by a member's voluntary participation in psychological counseling service.

**7. Current Service Provider:**

SOUTHWEST EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 501-663-1797 or 1-800-777-1797 24 hours a day/7 days a week. [www.southwesteap.com](http://www.southwesteap.com)