



MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING INSTRUCTION

POLICE OFFICER SUPPORT TEAM (POST)

ISSUED: January 3, 2019

EFFECTIVE: January 3, 2019

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:

Director Regina Howard

DATE: December 10, 2018

ACTION: Amends SOI (November 7, 2014)

WILEAG STANDARD(S): NONE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating instruction is to establish policy regarding the Police Officer Support Team (POST) and the department's relationship with this organization. The Police Officer Support Team (POST) works to provide department members who may be suffering from emotional, personal, physical, or stress related difficulties with access to support services.

II. RELATIONSHIP OF DEPARTMENT TO POLICE OFFICER SUPPORT TEAM (POST)

- A. The Chief of Police shall permit POST to continue as an independent entity consistent with Fair Labor Standards Act requirements for uncompensated "volunteer" status. The extent of the department's participation in the POST program is codified in this standard operating instruction.
- B. POST members are to be documented on the daily line-ups provided to the Technical Communications Division for each shift. This attribute shall also be entered for each POST member in the Computer Aided Dispatch system. In addition, the POST board shall periodically disseminate a current roster of active POST members to all work locations.

III. POST DUTIES

A. EXECUTIVE BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. The affairs and funds of the Police Officer Support Team are governed exclusively by the POST executive board.
- 2. The POST executive board's duties include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Incident response coordination.
 - i. Critical incident response within MPD.
 - ii. Major incident response within MPD.
 - iii. Respond to requests for assistance from outside jurisdictions for peer support during a critical or major incident.

- b. Facilitate the operation of the POST 24-hour hotline (414-352-5125).
- c. Responsible for the day-to-day operations of POST.
 - i. Act as a resource for POST members.
 - ii. Selecting new or removing existing POST members.
 - iii. Monitoring POST funds.
 - iv. Plan training of POST members.
- d. Develop and maintain contacts with:
 - i. City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program.
 - ii. Law enforcement community.
 - iii. Mental health agencies.
 - iv. MPD Early Intervention Program.
- e. Act as the liaison between the Milwaukee Police Department and POST.
 - i. Maintain and compile non-identifying statistical information related to POST services.
 - ii. Complete an annual report to the Chief of Police.
- f. Attend all POST executive board meetings and training sessions.
- g. Develop POST-related instructional material for presentation to members during specialized training, in-service, and recruit training.
- h. Maintain confidentiality as defined in section VI.

B. POST MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Serve as a point of contact for department members who seek advice, support, referral and/or treatment options, as well as provide 24-hour crisis assistance or non-crisis peer support services to members and/or their families.
2. Attend and participate in local seminars and training sessions relating to matters of employee wellness/counseling.
3. Maintain confidentiality as defined in section VI.

IV. CONDUCT OF POST MEMBERS AT POLICE-RELATED CRITICAL INCIDENTS / MAJOR INCIDENTS

- A. A “critical incident” is defined as an incident involving a department member that results in death or great bodily harm to a person that is caused by a member’s actions, occurs while in police custody, or any incident that the Chief of Police or his/her designee (must be assistant chief or inspector rank) declare a critical incident. Any injury to a person as a result of a firearm discharge by a department member, not resulting in death, shall also be considered a critical incident.
- B. A “major incident” is defined as those events that are not considered critical incidents by the department but still negatively affect members. Major incidents include any powerful or sudden event that falls outside the usual realm of human experience and may be markedly distressing to the individual or group. Such events may have sufficient impact to overwhelm usual coping skills and may include but are not limited to a serious injury of a co-worker, suicide of a colleague or citizen, multi casualty disaster or terrorist event, or a serious injury to the officer that may result in disability. This definition must remain fluid, as that which negatively affects one officer may not affect another.

C. NOTIFICATIONS

1. When a department defined “critical incident” occurs, notification shall be made to POST at (414-352-5125) by the Technical Communications Division, as soon as practical.
2. If a major incident occurs, notification to POST should be made as soon as practical by phone (414-352-5125) or email at milwpolicepost@gmail.com.
 - a. Both phone and email are completely confidential.
 - b. Either can be used for any concerns involving a department member.

Note: Occasionally a non-MPD POST trained member may be monitoring the POST phone. Members calling POST should identify themselves as a member of MPD and ask for POST services to streamline the process.

- D. Whenever a POST member responds to a police-related critical incident the following provisions shall govern the conduct of the POST member. These provisions shall be applicable at the location of the incident, the site of any investigation associated with the incident or any other location associated with the incident:
1. The purpose of a POST member’s response to a critical incident is to offer peer support to the affected department member(s). It is not investigative in purpose but exists to offer encouragement, educate and normalize potential stress reactions that sometimes occur after a critical incident, and to provide the member(s) involved with information regarding the subsequent mental health debriefing process. The responding POST member will not ask any questions regarding the incident.

Note: Arrangements for the mandatory department debriefing and any

subsequent counseling sessions arising from that debriefing shall be made through the Early Intervention Program (EIP) coordinator (see SOP 453.115).

2. A POST member arriving at a location involving a police-related critical incident shall report directly to the command post and inform the supervisory officer of the POST member's presence and purpose. A POST member shall not enter a crime scene without the approval of the supervisory officer in charge of the investigation.
3. A POST member may have access to department members involved in the incident upon approval of the supervisory officer in charge of the investigation. POST members shall be subject to the directives of the supervisory officer in charge of the investigation.
4. When the supervisory officer in charge permits access to members involved in the incident, such members may accept or decline the services of the POST member.
5. Under no circumstances may a POST member interfere with any investigation or department procedure. If, in the judgment of a supervisory officer, a POST member's conduct interferes with any investigation or department procedure, the POST member shall be ordered to desist and vacate the scene. That supervisor will then file a memo to inform their commanding officer of the incident. The commanding officer shall then notify the POST executive board chairperson (current board members and positions are available via the POST [website](#)) of the incident and resulting issue as soon as practical.

V. TIME SPENT BY POST MEMBERS ENGAGING IN POST-RELATED ACTIVITY

A. POST-RELATED ACTIVITY PERFORMED WITHIN POST MEMBERS' NORMAL HOURS OF WORK (TRAINING)

The Chief may allow POST members to engage in POST-related training during the member's normal hours of work so long as a request for such time is submitted in writing to the Chief in advance and the request is approved. The Chief reserves the right to deny any such requests.

B. EMERGENCY SITUATION

1. When POST is called to respond to a critical incident, an on-duty POST member will be allowed to provide POST-related services during such member's normal hours of work, if authorized to do so by his/her shift commander. POST members directly involved in a particular critical incident shall not be used to provide POST-related services.
2. If POST is needed for a major incident the board is to be contacted by phone or email.

C. POST-RELATED ACTIVITY OUTSIDE POST-MEMBERS' NORMAL HOURS OF WORK

No compensation whatsoever shall be provided to POST members performing POST-related activities outside a member's normal hours of work.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. Except as provided below, all contacts by department members with the city of Milwaukee Employees' Assistance Program, or any member of POST, shall remain strictly confidential and not subject the member to disciplinary action for failing to report disobedience of orders by any member that comes to their attention. The exceptions to this confidentiality policy are those circumstances where:
1. A member is believed to be an imminent threat to the safety of him/herself or others;
 2. Child abuse is involved;
 3. The commission of a felony is involved.
- B. The confidentiality provisions of this section are limited to contacts with the city of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program or any member of POST while such member is functioning in such capacity. POST members shall specifically and initially advise all concerned of the confidentiality provisions set forth herein and further, that there is no guarantee that a court will not be able to order either the individual seeking assistance, or the POST member to whom he/she spoke, to disclose any conversations which may have taken place, unless the POST member has a confidentiality privilege under Wis. Stat. § 905 (e.g., clergy).
- C. If there is reason to believe that a POST team member has breached confidentiality; the POST executive board will review the incident and allegations, as well as the member's fitness to continue as a POST member. The executive board retains the right to remove any member from the team if there is cause to believe that confidentiality has been breached.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

- A. From time to time, POST will increase its membership by posting volunteer team openings via *Department Memorandum*.
- B. Department members who wish to become members of POST shall submit a *Department Memorandum* (form PM-9E) to their commanding officer.
- C. The commanding officer shall forward all applicant *Department Memorandums* to the Human Resources Division. The Human Resources Division shall send all applicant *Department Memorandums* to the POST executive board chairperson (current board members and positions are available via the POST [website](#)).
- D. The executive board shall disseminate a confidential application to each interested member with instructions on how to complete and return the application for the executive board's review.
- E. Members shall be chosen based on POST by-laws, recommendations from their peers and superiors, and be in good standing with the department.

- F. The executive board retains the right to deny membership to any applicant.
- G. Selected applicants will be required to initially complete a 40-hour new peer support member training session and thereafter, attend POST in-service training sessions.

VIII. POST USE OF DEPARTMENT FACILITIES

- A. The department will, from time to time, designate those department facilities that may be used by POST members for POST-related activity. Each instance involving such use of departmental facilities by POST members shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:
 - 1. Reasonable advance notice is provided by POST to the commanding officer having jurisdiction over the facility requested;
 - 2. The commanding officer determines that the facility requested is available during the time requested; and
 - 3. Use of such facility by POST comports with requirements established for this purpose by the commanding officer.
- B. After obtaining approval, the POST board will notify OMAP, in the form of a memorandum, of the date and location of the POST activity so that it may be approved and posted to be read at roll call.



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