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# GENERAL ORDER

FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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SUBJECT: PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

NUMBER: 430.4

CANCELS ORDER DATED: 1-1-97

ISSUE DATE: 4-1-97

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Peer Support program is to provide information, education, and support to Department personnel affected by traumatic incidents.

II. TYPES OF INCIDENTS

The Peer Support Team Coordinator or their designee shall respond to the following types of incidents:

- A. Any incident which results in the death or serious injury of a person by a Department employee.
- B. Any incident in which an employee is killed or seriously injured in the line of duty.
- C. Any traumatic incident that the on-scene supervisor deems appropriate.

III. SERVICES

The Peer Support Team will provide the following services:

- A. Information concerning Department policies and procedures.
- B. Post Shooting Syndrome education.
- C. Stress Reaction education.
- D. Immediate support services as needed, including contacting family members, arranging transportation, providing food, etc.
- E. Liaison with Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and other health care resources.

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- F. Continuing employee support over time, as may be requested by the employee.

IV. PEER SUPPORT TEAM

- A. The Peer Support Team will consist of a volunteer representative from each station and section chosen by their peers or the Peer Support Team Coordinator, and approved by their station or division commander. The Peer Support Team Coordinator will report directly to the Patrol Bureau Commander (Division Two) on administrative matters concerning the program. Peer Support Team members will be trained in areas pertinent to traumatic incidents and will be required to attend periodic training meetings.
- B. Recognizing that Public Safety Communications Center personnel have unique needs inherent with their profession, the Peer Support Team members of the PSCC shall receive the same training and comply with the same policies and procedures as outlined. Response criteria for PSCC traumatic incidents shall be modified in a manner consistent with the PSCC working environment and approval by the Director of Public Safety Communications.

V. NOTIFICATION AND RESPONSE

- A. The Peer Support Team Coordinator or their designee shall be notified promptly of any Internal Affairs Bureau or Criminal Investigations Bureau response to a shooting incident involving a Fairfax County officer.
- B. The incident commander or on-scene supervisor may request the response of a Peer Support Team member through the PSCC Supervisor. Upon receipt of such a request, the PSCC Supervisor shall promptly notify the Peer Support Team Coordinator or their designee.
- C. This policy does not preclude any Department employee from informally contacting any Peer Support Team member for personal assistance.

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VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. Each Peer Support Team member will treat each contact with the utmost level of confidentiality. Unauthorized disclosure of information concerning specific incidents or employee involvement in such incidents learned as a result of Peer Support Team intervention shall not occur unless such disclosure is required by exigent circumstances, a court of competent jurisdiction or at the direction of the Chief of Police.
- B. Peer Support Team members involved in a criminal or administrative incident or investigation giving rise to a request for Peer Support Team intervention shall not be assigned to provide Peer Support services to other involved employees.
- C. Peer Support Team members will not be routinely interviewed by investigative authorities concerning matters in which the Peer Support Team member may have gained knowledge of through Peer Support Team intervention. Absent exigent circumstances, requests to interview Peer Support Team members shall be directed to the Chief of Police.
- D. Employees receiving Peer Support Team services shall be advised as to the limits of this confidentiality prior to any discussion.

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This General Order becomes effective April 1, 1997 and rescinds all previous General Orders pertaining to the subject.

ISSUED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Chief of Police

County Executive