
	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT			
	Peer Support			
	GENERAL ORDER	202.5		Related CALEA Standards:
	Effective Date	06/01/2015		22.2.6, 35.1.9
Authorized by:	Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE	SIGNATURE	DATE	

I. DEPARTMENT POLICY

It is the policy of the Department to provide timely and appropriate peer support to all of its members involved in traumatic or emotionally-charged situations.

Peer support is available 24 hours a day through specially-trained members of this and other law enforcement agencies.

The Department recognizes that while peer support is available on a 24-hour-a-day basis, the ultimate decision to accept or use the support services is a personal choice made by every member.

The Department may require a member to seek intervention services, treatment, or be evaluated by a physician, psychologist, etc., if deemed appropriate.

II. PEER SUPPORT

A. Availability and Procedures

1. As a member of Montgomery County's *Peer Support Team*, the GPD Peer Counselor(s) is available 24-hours.
2. Unless waived by the officer involved, a GPD Peer Counselor will be notified by the on duty supervisor whenever a GPD member is involved in any of the incidents or events listed below:
 - *Anytime a member witnesses the death of or serious injury to any person;*
 - *Incidents involving the death of or serious physical/emotional trauma to a child;*
 - *Those situations which by their nature would have a severe adverse affect on the member.*
3. When the Peer Counselor is notified by the supervisor of any of the above incidents, command staff members shall also be notified.

4. Any member at any time may contact the Department's Peer Counselors (**cellular phone- (Rice) at the number listed for him in the General Orders Phone Number WIP.xlsx**), for themselves or on behalf of another member.
5. The Department respects the privacy of communications occurring during peer support interventions. The Peer Counselor is bound to confidentiality standards.
6. GPD Peer Counselors will contact the designated Montgomery County Peer Support Team psychologist and a "call-out" record of notifications will be completed.

B. MCP Peer Support Team

1. The County's Peer Support Team (PST) will only be activated upon the notification of, and with the approval of the PST Director or on-call psychologist.
2. The on duty supervisor at the scene will evaluate the need for PST involvement and, when appropriate, request PST via Public Safety Communications Center.
3. The on duty supervisor will request PST activation for the circumstances listed in Section II, unless waived by the officer involved.
4. Responsibilities of the on duty supervisor include, and may not be limited to:
 - *Ensuring that the scene is under control and the situation is stabilized; Gather information to determine what occurred, the identity of sworn and civilian members who may be affected, observed physiological or emotional reactions, obtain any information which may help PST members, and the location of affected members;*
 - *Consider requesting PST response in any situation not enumerated in this directive which may have an adverse impact on affected personnel (i.e., abuse of a child; death of a person resulting from non-police-related activity; fatal collisions, homicides, etc.).*
5. Once a decision is made to activate the PST, the request will be made through Public Safety Communications Center. If possible, a phone number will be provided where the on duty supervisor can

be reached.

6. PST activation/response may be delayed in those situations that are stable but ongoing (i.e., hostage/barricade situation).

C. Peer Counselor/Team Member Conduct

1. Peer Counselors/Team Members shall conduct themselves in a professional manner, maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the member(s) seeking support or for whom support is being provided.
2. Upon the Peer Counselor's/Team Member's arrival at the scene, they shall immediately contact the on duty supervisor and evaluate the situation.
3. In those situations where the MCP psychologist is responding to the scene, PST activity will occur under the psychologist's direction.
4. Peer Counselors/Team Members will offer and provide support/assistance according to approved training and consistent with the mission of the PST.
5. Peer Counselors/Team Members will not interfere in any investigatory process. Peer Counselor/Team Members, and investigators and other officers will work cooperatively to protect the integrity of crime scenes and ensure that appropriate services are available to affected members.