



**POLICE • FIRE**  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

# GENERAL ORDER

## WAUPACA POLICE DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT: PEER SUPPORT**

SCOPE: All Department Personnel  
DISTRIBUTION: General Orders Manual

REFERENCE:

NUMBER: 2.16  
ISSUED: XX/XX/2021  
EFFECTIVE: XX/XX/2021  
 RESCINDS  
 AMENDS  
WILEAG 5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION  
STANDARDS: N/A

**PURPOSE:** Provide guidance related to the responsibilities and expectations of the Peer Support Team. The Peer Support Team is designed to be a confidential consultation resource for members and is not to be used for an investigative tool or disciplinary measure. The team may consist of trained sworn or civilian Waupaca Police Department personnel able to support members by providing assistance in the areas of personal, and group debriefings, anonymous and confidential peer support, and resilience training.

This General Order consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. DEFINITIONS
- II. GENERAL INFORMATION
- III. PEER SUPPORT NOTIFICATION AND RESPONSE
- IV. CONFIDENTIALITY
- V. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES
- VI. PEER SUPPORT SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES
- VII. PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES
- VIII. TEAM SELECTION
- IX. REQUIRED TRAINING
- X. FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

**I. DEFINITIONS**

- 1) **CRITICAL INCIDENT-** Any situation faced by Officers or support staff that cause them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions and which has the potential to interfere with the ability to function either at the scene or at a later time.
- 2) **PEER SUPPORT TEAM-** A group consisting of sworn and civilian employees who have been trained in crisis intervention or peer support to

assist employees with stressors both on and off duty.

- 3) PEER SUPPORT MEMBER- Members of the agency who are trained in Crisis Intervention and Peer Support and are accepted to the Peer Support Team.
- 4) EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM- Mental Health Resources that are available to all Waupaca Police Department Employees and their families.
- 5) PEER SUPPORT SUPERVISOR- Peer Support Member assigned to the oversight and administrative functions of the Peer Support Team. This position is not based off rank, but rather training and experience in Law Enforcement Mental Health and is appointed by the Chief of Police.

## **II. GENREAL INFORMATION**

- 1) The Peer Support Team is under direction and supervision of the Peer Support Supervisor.
- 2) The Peer Support Team shall not interfere with any on-going criminal or internal investigations.
- 3) This Policy is not to interfere in any way with the voluntary use of or referral to any other related programs or services.
- 4) Being a member of the Peer Support Team is completely voluntary and overtime may not be guaranteed for work outside of normally scheduled hours.

## **III. PEER SUPPORT NOTIFICATION AND RESPONSE**

- 1) Automatic activation of Peer Support should be mandatory in the following circumstances:
  - Officer Involved Shootings
  - The actions of an officer, whether accidental or deliberate, resulted in the death or serious injury of a person
  - An Officer was present at the death or serious injury of another Officer
  - Any situation that the on duty or on call supervisor deems to be particularly traumatic
- 2) The on duty or on call supervisor will contact the peer support supervisor with the following information for emergency activation:
  - Number of Officers affected
  - Basic information of the event
  - Location of Officers

- 3) Peer Support members may be assigned to assist Officers of the Waupaca Police Department who may be experiencing other stressors not related to a critical incident but may be impacted by a traumatic event of a personal nature.
- 4) Officers may self-refer to Peer Support by speaking to any Peer Support Member and are not obligated or required to advise their supervisor or the Peer Support Supervisor. If an Officer needs assistance with getting in contact with a Peer Support Member, they may request it through the Peer Support Supervisor or with assistance from any officer they feel comfortable asking. A list of Peer Support Members and their contact information shall be displayed in a semi private area of the Police Department.
- 5) Peer Support Members may also be requested to assist outside agencies with critical incidents or Officers in crisis. Providing support to outside agencies shall be voluntary unless the requesting agent agrees to pay for services provided such as training or critical incident debriefings. All pre-arranged assignments with outside agencies shall be approved by the Chief of Police or Peer Support Supervisor.

#### **IV. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 1) Officers who choose to use Peer Support must be made aware that no special legal privilege is extended to Peer Support Members as described in Wisconsin State Statute 905.
- 2) The agency and team members must agree to actively protect confidentiality in order to sustain the program viability.
- 3) Peer Support Members shall ensure agency members understand all conversations and sessions are strictly confidential unless it involves the following:
  - Danger to self
  - Danger to others
  - Suspected child abuse
  - Drug Offenses (delivery)
  - Domestic Violence
  - Factual elder abuse
  - In cases where law requires divulgence
  - Where divulgence is requested by the peer
  - Criminal Activity
  - Being under the influence of an intoxicant while on duty

#### **V. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) Consider communications between Officers and Peer Support Members as confidential and shall not question a Peer Support Member concerning the

identity or services provided to an Officer.

- 2) Support scheduling and logistic requirements of the team and its members regarding training and/or special duties.
- 3) Make provisions for psychological services to support the team upon the request of the Peer Support Supervisor such as allowing officers time off to seek follow-up assistance.

## **VI. PEER SUPPORT SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) Ensure Peer Support Members adhere to the policy and procedure set forth in this General Order.
- 2) Monitor Peer Support Members to insure they meet the requirements of their regular duties and remain eligible for Peer Support Team participation.
- 3) Monitor Peer Support Members performance to insure they meet team standards of training, performance, and behavior.
- 4) Monitor team members to insure they are not emotionally overwhelmed by the scope and duties of being on the team.
- 5) Administrative and Logistical needs of the team, including but not limited to:
  - a) Maintaining Roster
  - b) Providing general administrative duties and oversight
  - c) Assure access to resources needed to provide support
- 6) Shall submit an annual report to the Chief of Police prior to February 28<sup>th</sup> the following year consisting of:
  - a. Number of Team Members
  - b. Number of Critical Incident Call-outs
  - c. Number of Peer Support Contacts
  - d. Specialized Training Provided by the Team
  - e. Man Hours Expended
  - THIS REPORT IS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY AND SHALL NOT REFERENCE OR INCLUDE THE NAMES OR EXPERIENCES OF ANY EMPLOYEE DISCLOSED DURING A PEER SUPPORT CONTACT

## **VII. PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY**

- 1) Sign a confidentiality agreement as part of appointment to the Peer Support Team and re-sign it annually.
- 2) Notify the Peer Support Supervisor immediately of issues that may impair or affect their ability to operate as a Peer Support Member.
- 3) Recognize that they are not a psychological service provider and operate only within the scope of their training and experience.
- 4) Do not keep or maintain detailed records of the sessions. Any notes taken during the sessions shall be used only for reference during the session and destroyed immediately at the completion of the session.
- 5) Avoid direct involvement in the incident and concentrate attention on assisting officers.
- 6) Provide peer support services and resiliency functions.
- 7) Submit the Peer Support worksheet following each session with the Peer Support Supervisor.

#### **VIII. TEAM SELECTION**

- 1) The team shall be composed of volunteer members of Waupaca Police Department.
- 2) Members must be in non-probationary status and in good standing with Waupaca Police Department.
- 3) Interested Officers must provide a letter of interest and a letter of reference from a fellow officer who IS NOT already on the Peer Support Team.
- 4) All interested Officers must interview one on one with the Peer Support Supervisor.
- 5) Individuals selected through this process shall go to all required training and periodic training deemed pertinent by the Peer Support Supervisor.
- 6) Individuals selected must complete the basic required training prior to becoming operational with the Peer Support Team.

#### **IX. REQUIRED BASIC TRAINING**

- 1) Questions Persuade Refer (QPR) for Law Enforcement
- 2) Specialized Peer Support training, which may or may not include Crisis Intervention Training.

**X. FOLLOW-UP SERVICES**

- 1) Shall be provided in accordance with guidelines in **General Order 2.05 III C 1&2** and may include psychological services or other professionals deemed appropriate. This follow up may be deemed mandatory by referral to a program by the Peer Support Supervisor or the Chief of Police.

Brian Hoelzel  
Chief of Police

This General Order cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

Initial XX/XX/2021