

Augusta County Emergency Services Officers Association

*Augusta County Government Center
P.O. Box 590 – 18 Government Center Lane
Verona, Virginia 24482*



Fire-EMS Standard Operating Guideline

Section:	2 General
Title:	CISD
Date:	August 2008

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

Case studies conducted by various medical groups and psychologists of major incidents where numerous injuries or fatalities occurred, as well as smaller incidents that were of unusually strong and emotional nature, have revealed that significant numbers of emergency medical services personnel (fire, EMS, rescue, law enforcement, emergency department) experienced some form of stress-related symptoms following the incident. Many of these symptoms were transitory and most personnel had no long-term effects.

These studies, however, have also revealed that a small percentage of personnel do experience continuing, long-term detrimental effects resulting from exposure to this type incident. Some of these effects have been delayed, surfacing later after a period of no apparent symptoms. Without professional intervention, these personnel have experienced declining work performance and deterioration of family relationships as well as increased health problems. One form of intervention that has proved to be of great usefulness for emergency workers that have experienced a critical incident is the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (C.I.S.D.) model conceived by Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell.

Critical Incident - is defined by Dr. Jeff Mitchell as "any situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later...All that is necessary is that the incident, regardless of the type, generates unusually strong feelings in the emergency worker."

Defusing - A defusing can be held immediately following a critical incident. This is a time when emergency workers involved in an incident can meet with a CISD team member (mental health professional or peer) and just talk about what has just happened. The team member associated with the defusing can offer some simple stress management education to the individuals involved in order for them to be able to understand what type of feelings/reactions that they may have over the next few hours or days and how best to possibly handle those feelings/reactions.

Debriefing - A confidential psycho-educational process designed to accelerate normal recovery from a stressful experience. Debriefings are usually held 24 to 72 hours after the event. The CISD team for a formal debriefing will consist of at least two mental health professionals and at least one peer debriefer.

Procedures for Debriefing

**Contact: Augusta County Emergency Operations Center -
 540-245-5501**

The information you will need before calling is the name and number of a contact person to make the final arrangements for the meeting. A brief description of the call, and an approximate number of people involved.

When to call - as soon as you think you will need us. Either on scene or later, we are here for all of you.

REMEMBER - AUGUSTA EOC - 540-245-5501

NAME OF CONTACT PERSON _____

NUMBER OF CONTACT PERSONS _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION _____

NUMBER OF PERSONS INVOLVED _____