

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 10		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT: INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT	SECTION 20	PAGE 1 of 2	EFFECTIVE DATE 05/15/2013

I. PURPOSE

The Chaplains associated with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department will play an integral role in Critical Incident Stress Management.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all SDFD Personnel.

III. AUTHORITY

The Fire Chief authorizes the information within this policy.

IV. POLICY

A. SDFD Employee Assistance

Case studies of major incidents where numerous injuries or fatalities occurred have revealed that significant numbers of emergency personnel experienced some form of stress-related symptoms following the incident. Many of these symptoms were transitory and most personnel had no long-term detrimental effects. These studies, however, also revealed that a small percentage of personnel do experience some form of long-term detrimental effects resulting from exposure to such incidents. 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.

1. Types of incidents that may warrant chaplaincy assistance:

- a. Line-of-duty death of a SDFD employee
- b. Serious line-of-duty injury or illness of a SDFD employee
- c. Suicide of a SDFD employee
- d. Multi-casualty incident/disaster
- e. Significant event involving children
- f. Significant event with which a SDFD employee identifies closely
- g. Personnel placed in extreme danger, e.g., hostage, assaults, etc.
- h. Prolonged incident with loss
- i. Excessive media interest
- j. Any incident where SDFD leadership and/or personnel feel an individual may benefit from intervention.

B. San Diego Community Assistance

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Community trauma can evoke a wide range of highly charged responses from both disaster victims and/or the emergency responders who are dispatched to provide care and support. The goal of the chaplain's service would be to ensure that affected individuals are assisted in coping with the challenges and stress they experience through a disaster as requested by the SDFD leadership. As such, SDFD chaplains can provide crisis intervention services to assist in the mitigation of the potentially harmful impact of a disaster. Within the arena of community service, chaplains exercise their care through a religiously neutral ethic and within the legal government boundaries.

1. For community disasters the chaplain services may include:
 - a. Supplying on-scene assistance in mitigating the stress reactions of affected community members as appropriately requested by SDFD leadership.
 - b. Assisting affected families by offering referrals of community support networks
 - c. Serving as liaisons with other helping agencies called to assist in a disaster
 - d. Providing assistance with any community ecumenical services that are in association with a disaster where the SDFD is involved