


# East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District

	<b>510 Critical Incident Stress</b>	
	<b>Implementation Date: 11/2000</b>	<b>Revision Date(s): 03/01/2014</b>
		<b>Reviewed Date(s):</b>
	<b>Forms or Attachments: None</b>	

## 1. Definitions:

Critical Incident Stress may occur in certain situations faced by emergency service personnel and may cause strong physical, emotional and behavioral reactions which may interfere with their functional ability.

- A. Line of duty death
- B. Line of duty injury
- C. Peer suicide
- D. Mass casualty
- E. Death or injury of children
- F. Known victim of relative
- G. Prolonged incident with bad outcome
- H. Night operation
- I. Increased media interest
- J. Emotional impact caused by violent death, fear of own death
- K. Trauma and critical incident stress both involve:
  - 1. Loss of self-esteem
  - 2. Loss of safety and security
  - 3. Loss of relationships
  - 4. Loss of identity
  - 5. Cumulative trauma

## 2. **Reactions to Critical Incident Stress**

Reactions seen among emergency service personnel following critical incidents:

### I. Physical

#### A. Acute-Effects that may be felt consciously:

1. heart palpitations
2. difficult/rapid breathing
3. dry mouth
4. chest tightness/pain
5. anorexia, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, "butterflies"
6. flushing, diaphoresis, body temperature fluctuation
7. urgency and frequency in urination.

### II Emotional

- A. anxiety
- B. fear
- C. grief
- D. depression
- E. hopelessness
- F. irritability
- G. anger
- H. overwhelmed
- I. numb
- J. sense of unreality
- K. identification with victim

### III Behavioral

- A. withdrawal

- B. emotional outburst
- C. hyper-alert to environment
- D. non-specific bodily complaints
- E. irritability

### 3. **Goals of Crisis Intervention**

- Support the person in distress
- Support the person through a period of difficulty with their degree of worth
- Prevent lasting psychological scarring
- Try to gather some benefit from coping with the crisis

### 4. **CISD Services**

#### A. On-scene Support

- Advice to the incident commander or his/her liaison on topic of stress management.
- One-on-one counseling to emergency workers showing obvious signs of stress.
- Assist in control of victims, survivors, and families.

#### B. Initial Defusing

- Usually occurs within a few hours of the incident to offer information, support, to set-up or establish a need for a formal debriefing, and to stabilize crew members.

#### C. Formal Debriefing

Occurs within 24-72 hours after the incident.

#### D. Education

Stress and CISD awareness for crews and their supervisors.

#### E. Individual Referrals

Local mental health team members are available for follow-up and long-term counseling.

#### F. Spouse Debriefings

For family members and significant others of those involved in critical incidents.

## 5. **Contacting the CISD Team**

Contacting the CISD Team is done by the Incident Commander or his/her Liaison Officer. Command or Liaison is to contact the on-duty supervisor at central dispatch by telephone. The dispatch supervisor will then activate the CISD Team.

The following information will be needed for the team:

1. Name and Title
2. Incident Information:
  - date and time
  - duration of incident
  - number and type of personnel
  - number of victims/patients
  - incident type
  - call back number
  - type of service desired
3. Suggested time and place for debriefing.

Any individual may request services through their supervisor.