


New Berlin Police Department Directives Manual		Directive Title: Police Organization Support Team (POST)			
Issue Date: 12/07/16	Effective Date: 04/17/19	Next Review Date: 02/01/22	Total Pages: Page 1 of 5	Directive Number: 2801	WILEAG Standards: 6.3.8

Purpose

This directive establishes a Police Organization Support Team (POST) for the department. In addition, this directive establishes the guidelines for the administration, selection, training and activation of POST. The department recognizes law enforcement is a stressful job, exposing its members to both acute and chronic stressors. These stressors can have a serious effect on the health and well-being of department members. The POST Team's primary purpose is to help members cope with both the acute and chronic stressors of our profession.

Policy

It is the policy of the New Berlin Police Department to establish and support a Police Organization Support Team (POST). The success of POST revolves around the department's understanding and acceptance of the confidentiality of information exchanged between department members seeking support and those providing the support. It is the policy of the department to provide confidentiality to the information exchanged in accordance with this directive.

Definitions

Acute Stress Disorder: An anxiety disorder which is triggered by exposure to a traumatic event that evoked significant fear or horror and/or a sense of helplessness. Most acute stress disorder symptoms will occur within 30 days of the traumatic event.

Chronic Stress: A buildup of stress over a long period of time. During the buildup period, conventional coping mechanisms fail to relieve the stress until what once was a manageable problem now becomes a burden.


Critical Incident: An event which has the potential to create an overwhelming reaction in an individual to the point which they are unable to function during or after the incident, or are unable to cope psychologically with the event. A situation does not have to be a major disaster to classify as a critical incident.

Debriefing: An in-depth discussion of a critical incident normally done within 72 hours of the incident. The goal of a debriefing is to provide individuals an opportunity to talk about their experience, feelings, symptoms and coping mechanisms within a group setting.

Defusing: A brief discussion concerning the facts of a critical incident. The defusing occurs the day of the incident before officers go home. The goal is to normalize feelings, advise of possible symptoms and to provide POST contact information in the event the officer needs to talk before the debriefing.

Police Organization Support Team: A voluntary team of members of the department who are trained to provide confidential support, referral information for officers, employees, and their families who have a need to talk about conflicts of feelings they have concerning professional or personal lives, or the relationship between the two.

POST Coordinator: A POST member elected by the Post Committee who is charged with the oversight of the POST.

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POST Member: Members of the department who make up the POST. POST members can be both sworn and non-sworn employees. POST members are trained to provide voluntary and confidential support. Their primary duty is to provide a confidential resource for members and their families to talk about professional and personal issues. All members, active and retired, agree to abide by this policy as a part of their membership on POST.

POST Mission

The mission of POST is to aid past/present members and their families during times of emotional, physical, personal or professional stress. POST exists to provide a voluntary and confidential outlet to obtain support from peers along with access to professional referrals.

POST Confidentiality Clause

Information exchanged during a contact with the City of New Berlin Employee Assistance Program, department Chaplain or a POST member will be kept confidential. No POST member will be required to reveal information that is relayed to them, even when ordered to do so by a supervisor, unless the information revealed falls into one of the following specific categories:

1. The information revealed leads the POST member to believe there is an imminent danger to the department member or someone else.
2. The information leads the POST member to believe the department member has committed a felony.
3. The POST member reasonably believes the information reveals a domestic abuse violation.
4. The POST member reasonably believes the information is related to a child abuse violation.

A POST member will not be subject to any disciplinary action for failing to reveal the nature of a contact with a department or family member. To ensure confidentiality will apply, POST members must take steps to clarify when a contact is in the capacity of a POST member and not a casual contact between employees.


If there is a reason to believe a POST member has breached the confidentiality clause of this directive, the POST Coordinator will review the facts surrounding the alleged confidentiality breach. If the POST Coordinator determines a POST member has breached the confidentiality clause, the POST Coordinator will recommend to the Chief of Police the POST member be removed from POST. The decision of the Chief of Police or designee will be final.

POST Organizational Structure

The members of POST will be comprised of both sworn and non-sworn members of the department who volunteer their time to help other members of the department. The Chief of Police will assign a member of the command staff to be a liaison to the POST team.

The POST Coordinator’s duties include:

1. Recommending new members to the POST.

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2. Scheduling POST training.
3. Reviewing and recommending changes to this directive.
4. Liaison between POST members, resource persons and the department.
5. Developing resources available as referrals for department members and their families.
6. Assigning POST members to any department member involved in a critical incident.
7. Assigning POST members to new or injured officers.

POST member duties include:

1. Providing confidential support to department members and their families.
2. Referring department members and their families to resources available to them.
3. Maintaining familiarity with the city's Employee Assistance Program.
4. Providing mentoring support to new and probationary officers to ensure they are adapting to the demands of law enforcement.

Selection Criteria for POST


Vacancies on the POST will be announced through a department-wide email. Department members interested in volunteering for POST will complete a letter of interest submitted through their chain of command to the Post Coordinator. The POST Coordinator, with confirmation from the Chief of Police or his designee, will select POST members according to the following criteria:

POST Coordinator:

1. Five years of experience in law enforcement.
2. Member in good standing with the department.
3. Possess personal qualities such as:
 - a. Maturity.
 - b. Demonstrated good judgment.
 - c. Personal and professional credibility and respect amongst peers.

POST Member:

1. Employee off probation.
2. Member in good standing with the department.
3. Possess personal qualities such as:
 - a. Maturity.
 - b. Demonstrated good judgment.
 - c. Personal and professional credibility and respect amongst peers.
4. Self-motivated and possess the ability to operate without direction.
5. Must be approachable and willing to be available during non-work hours.
6. Must have exceptional interpersonal and listening skills.
7. Must understand this is a volunteer position and POST members may or may not be compensated for acting as a POST member outside of their duty hours.

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POST members can be removed from the POST for:

1. Breach of the confidentiality clause.
2. Failure to attend POST training as required by the POST Coordinator.
3. Loss of good standing with the department.
4. Leave of absence.
5. Resignation

POST Training

All volunteer members assigned to the POST will receive at least eight hours of basic training before acting in the capacity of a POST member. Basic and on-going POST training should consist of:

1. Debriefing techniques.
2. Defusing techniques.
3. Peer-to-peer counseling.
4. Suicide prevention.
5. Active Listening

POST Referrals and Activation


Whenever a POST member confers with another employee or family member, or is activated to respond to a critical incident to provide service, the POST member must understand he/she is volunteering his/her time. POST members will receive compensation while attending POST approved training. In addition, the department will sponsor and pay for all POST related training which is approved through the normal training submission process.

Past/Current Department members or their families may contact a POST member for assistance at any time. In addition, any department member may refer another department member to the POST by sending an email to the POST Coordinator. The POST Coordinator, in turn, will contact the referred member and determine whether or not that person wants assistance. If assistance is requested, the POST Coordinator will assign a POST member to assist the department member.

Additionally, a POST member will be made available to any department member involved in a critical incident. POST members will make themselves available to the Shift Commander to assist with defusing and debriefing any incident the Shift Commander feels may affect a member of the shift from coping or dealing with an incident. Shift/Division commanders or designee is encouraged to contact the POST Coordinator whenever they feel someone from POST is needed.

Whenever a POST member responds to any critical incident, the provisions outlined below shall govern the conduct of the POST member. These provisions shall be applicable at the location of the incident, the site of any investigation associated with the incident or any other location associated with the incident.

1. The purpose of a POST member's response to a critical incident is to offer peer support to the affected department member(s); it is not investigative in nature but rather to offer encouragement, to educate and

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normalize potential stress reactions that sometimes occur after a critical incident and to provide the member(s) involved with information regarding the subsequent mental health debriefing process.

2. A POST member arriving at a location involving a police-related critical incident shall report directly to the command post and inform the supervisory officer of the POST member's presence and purpose. A POST member shall not enter a crime scene without the approval of the supervisory officer in charge of the investigation.
3. A POST member may have access to the department member(s) involved in the incident upon approval of the supervisory officer in charge of the investigation. POST members shall be subject to the directives of the supervisory officer in charge of the investigation.
4. When the supervisory officer in charge permits access to members involved in the incident, such members may accept or decline the services of the POST member.
5. Under no circumstances may a POST member interfere with any investigation or department procedure. If, in the judgment of a supervisory officer, a POST member's conduct interferes with any investigation or department procedure, the POST member may be ordered to stop interfering or leave the scene.

Revision Notes:

4/17/19 - Re-titled to "Police Organization Support Team" this change occurs throughout the document. Under definitions Post Coordinator added elected by the Post Committee. Removed selected by the Chief of Police. Post mission changed to aid past and present members and family. Under POST structure added "The Chief of Police will assign a member of the command staff to be a liaison to the POST team." Under Selection Criteria "with confirmation of the Chief of Police". Post Referrals and Activation removed "POST members will not be compensated for their services outside of duty hours." Added which is approved through the normal training submission process, Shift/Division commanders or designee is encouraged to contact the POST Coordinator whenever they feel someone from POST is needed.

By Order of: 
 Jeffrey Hingiss Chief of Police