CARVER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Guidelines

Section 3.15 – Critical Incident Stress **June 15, 2013**

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to assure that members who perform difficult emergency operations under high stress receive appropriate intervention as needed.

1.1 SCOPE

This guideline covers all members of the Carver Fire Department.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

01. A Critical Incident is defined as "Any situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reaction (stress), which has the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later".

02. Several classic situations are known to have strong effects on emergency workers to a point where intervention is recommended. Those situations include:

- **A.** Death or serious injury to a member in the line of duty
- **B.** Personal suicide of a member
- **C.** Death of a child
- **D.** Malicious or careless injury to a child
- **E.** An incident where there is serious injury or death to a family member of a rescuer.
- **F.** Multiple casualty incidents
- **G.** Death or serious injury to a civilian caused by emergency service operations.
- **H.** Incidents where the lives of firefighters are threatened or they feel they are in extreme danger
- **I.** Incidents that are distressing to firefighters because of unusual sights, smells, or sounds, or incidents that are highly charged with emotion
- **J.** Incidents that attract significant media attention about fire-fighting crews that may be detrimental

1.3 PROCESS

The Plymouth County Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) consists of emergency service personnel who are trained to assist and support peers in stress though a group discussion of the incident.

When a debriefing is requested, an effort is made to match the situation with the Team members who can be of the most assistance. The CISM team is made up of career and call firefighters, Company and Chief Officers, EMT's, Paramedics, Divers, Police Officers, and Mental Health Professionals in an effort to assure diversity of background knowledge and experiences. This allows the team to have a better understanding of the situation faced by the emergency personnel.

A CISM team for Carver would be made up of members from outside the Carver area. Every effort is made to bring in team members for an incident that are not from the immediate area of the incident community.

The purpose of the CIS debriefing is to help restore members back into service so they are emotionally prepared to continue their duties and to provide peer support. The CIS de-briefing is not a critique of the incident, and the team will not act as a forum for discussion that is judgmental of any aspect of the overall operation in general, or the actions of individuals specifically.

1.4 GUIDELINE

When an incident occurs that meet one or more of the criteria listed above, the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team will be notified. A meeting will be set-up with the team at a neutral site in an effort to provide peer support for members who may be experiencing stress from the incident. The team meeting is generally held 24 to 72 hours after the critical incident.

Department members, including Public Safety Dispatcher's, and others who had some part in the actual incident are welcome to attend the debriefing session. Members who did not participate in the incident at any level will not attend. Attendance by members is strictly voluntary.

The CISM session is done in strict confidentially, and nothing that is said or discussed leaves the room.

The team will be requested by a Chief Officer, or by a Department Officer if a Chief Officer is unavailable. The team may also be accessed individually by calling the C-MED-County Control Center at 508-747-1779. Whenever, the team is accessed, a Chief Officer will be notified.