# 26-005 - Responding To Department Employees In Crisis

**Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**

**FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE**

**Field Operations Support Services**

## RESPONDING TO DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES IN CRISIS

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to establish policy and procedures for responding to calls involving employees experiencing a mental health crisis.

### CRISIS DEFINITIONS

A psychiatric crisis is defined as a situation in which an individual experiences a sudden and significant deterioration in their mental health, leading to distress and an inability to function normally. This can include extreme anxiety, panic attacks, psychosis (such as hallucinations or delusions), severe depression, suicidal ideation, or an emotional breakdown. The person may feel overwhelmed, out of control, or unable to cope with their thoughts and emotions.

A suicidal or homicidal crisis is defined as a situation in which an individual shifts from ideation to action.

**Note:** If the employee is engaged and collaborative about their suicidal ideation with no imminent plan and/or intent to die from suicide it is not a suicidal crisis.

### MENTAL EVALUATION TEAM (MET) & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES BUREAU (PSB) PROCEDURES

When a call comes in to MET triage regarding an employee in crisis, responding MET personnel will call PSB at 213-738-3500 (Mon-Fri 0700-1700) or via their on-call services through the 24 Hour Operations Center at 213-229-2222, collaborating immediately to assess the situation and determine the appropriate response.

If the crisis is determined to be a suicidal or homicidal crisis, the following steps shall be taken:

#### Incident(s) occurring within LASD reporting districts

1. Contact the employee's unit of assignment and obtain additional relevant information about the employee. Consider the following but not limited to.

1. Emergency Contact info
2. Time at their unit of assignment
3. Work Status
4. Any recent issues in the workplace.
5. Working relationships

2. If unable to contact the employee, a welfare check shall be conducted and PSB shall be notified to be available for consultation and follow-up with the employee.

3. Request Mental Evaluation Team (MET) to respond in conjunction with deputy personnel assigned to the Sheriff's station where the incident occurred.

4. A MET deputy shall respond along with a MET supervisor with the rank of Sergeant or above. MET shall consult with PSB to develop a plan between the Department's responding supervisor and the employee's unit of assignment.

5. If available, a supervisor with the rank of Sergeant or above from the employee's unit of assignment shall respond to liaison with the handling Sheriff's station and MET. If a supervisor from the employee's unit of assignment is unavailable, the nearest Sheriff's Station Watch Commander shall be contacted to ensure that a supervisor responds. MET will conduct an evaluation of the employee to determine whether they meet the criteria for an involuntary psychiatric hold.

6. Absent exigent circumstances, the employee should not be transported to another location prior to assessment by MET.

7. If criteria for an involuntary hold are established, MET will transport the employee to a psychiatric facility and submit a petition for a 5150 Welfare and Institutions (W.I.C.) hold. Any incident reports shall be labeled confidential and forwarded to MET.

8. If an involuntary hold is determined to be necessary, the responding Sheriff's Department supervisor shall ensure that the employee's Department-issued weapon(s) and any personal firearms are secured for safekeeping in accordance with Department policy and existing laws.

**Note:** Department-issued weapon(s) shall be secured by the employee's unit of assignment Watch Commander or Unit Commander.

**Note:** If the employee in crisis is contacted by a Department member prior to requesting MET and is receptive to, or requests to self-admit to a psychiatric hospital, there is no need to request MET. MET will not respond, assess, or transport an employee for self-admittance.

If there is no immediate or imminent risk to the life of the employee or others, self-admission is the preferable option before placing an employee on an involuntary hold. In these cases, the unit of assignment must ensure that the employee is admitted to the hospital before ceasing further action. If in the event that the employee self-admits, and the employee voluntarily surrenders their firearm(s) to the Department for safekeeping, the responding supervisor shall account for the employee's duty weapon and other Department-owned or issued firearm(s) for safekeeping. There is no need to take possession of Department-owned firearms or other personally owned firearms at that time unless the employee voluntarily surrenders the weapons to the

Department's custody for safekeeping or if required by law.

### Incident(s) occurring outside LASD reporting districts

1. If available, a supervisor with the rank of Sergeant or above from the employee's unit of assignment in coordination with PSB, shall respond to liaison and provide information to the handling agency. If a supervisor from the employee's unit of assignment is unavailable, the nearest Sheriff's Station Watch Commander shall be contacted to ensure that a supervisor responds.

2. If the handling agency does not have a crisis intervention team (similar to MET), MET shall offer to assist at the agency's discretion and with approval of the MET Lieutenant.

3. If the employee is placed on an involuntary hold, the responding Sheriff's Department supervisor shall ensure that the employee's Department-issued weapon(s) are secured for safekeeping at their unit of assignment. The outside agency shall be responsible for securing any personal firearms in accordance with their policy or as required by law.

**Note:** If the employee is out of state at the time or too far away for department personnel to respond, a supervisor from the employee's unit of assignment in coordination with PSB, shall liaison with the handling agency via phone, obtain the outcome of the crisis response, account for the employee's duty weapon and any other Department owned weapons.

If the incident occurs outside of LASD's reporting district and no crime occurred, LASD may respond and handle the incident at the request of the handling agency or the employee, with the MET Lieutenant's approval.

### Responding Supervisor Responsibilities

The responding supervisor (of the rank of Sergeant or above) in coordination with PSB, shall be responsible for gathering information necessary for a verbal notification to the Watch Commander and Unit Commander and shall not investigate the incident or interfere with the primary responding station/agency and/or MET during their evaluation of the employee.

The responding supervisor or a supervisor from the employee's unit of assignment shall ensure that notification is made to PSB (if not already done so) regarding the status of the employee. PSB will coordinate with the employee to provide post-crisis support. Services from PSB are confidential for the employee; therefore, information regarding follow-up from PSB will not be available to the unit of assignment unless the employee authorizes a release of information. PSB will assess the needs of the employee and offer services which may include a critical incident debrief, counseling, post-hospitalization case management, referral to peer support, etc.

The unit of assignment will determine if a mental health firearms prohibition was placed on the employee by the psychiatric facility. The unit of assignment will also consult with the Disability Management and Compliance Unit (DMCU) to determine if there are any work accommodations or if a fitness for duty evaluation referral is necessary (refer to Manual of Policy and Procedures 3-02/040.50 - Emotional Behavioral Concerns).

**REFERENCES**

California Code, WIC 5150

California Code, WIC 8102

California Code, WIC 8103

16-003 Calls for Service Involving Alleged Mentally Ill Persons

5-09/070.05 - Emergency Detention

5-09/070.10 - Non-Detention Field Situations

5-09/180.05 - Possession, Confiscation and Release of Firearms - Mentally Ill Persons

3-02/040.50 - Emotional Behavioral Concerns