

---

# **Policy Directive**

## **OLATHE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

---



---

SUBJECT: PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM  
CANCELS: N/A

NUMBER: 1.11  
DATE: 1/15/2008

---

### **CONTENT**

**Purpose**  
**Goals**  
**Procedure**  
**Peer Support Advisory Committee**  
**Peer Support Psychologist**  
**Peer Support Program Manager**  
**Peer Supporter Personnel**  
**Rules and Regulations**  
**Confidentiality**

#### **Purpose**

1. This procedure establishes guidelines for a program offering assistance and appropriate support resources to members of the Olathe Police Department when personal or professional problems negatively affect their work performance, family unit or self.

#### **Goals**

1. Provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to members who express a need for assistance.
2. Promote trust, allow appropriate anonymity and preserve confidentiality for persons using the Peer Support Program within the guidelines of the program.
3. Develop Peer Supporters who can identify personal conflicts and provide guidance or referrals to professional or alternate resources as required.
4. Maintain an effective Peer Support training and response program.
5. Check on the status of illnesses and those injured on duty and provide support when desired and needed.

## **Procedure**

### **Requesting of Peer Support Services**

1. Any member may contact the Peer Support Team Member of his or her choice at any time, whether on or off duty, to request assistance or support.
2. A list of Peer Supporters will be distributed to each member. The list will also be posted on the Olathe Police Department Intranet. Members can contact their supervisors of the Olathe Police Department Personnel division if they need to obtain an additional list.

### **Notification**

1. The Peer Support Program manager shall be notified of the following incidents:
  - a. Death of a member of the agency;
  - b. Serious illness or injury of a member of this agency; (only with the members express permission; HIPPA Compliance)
  - c. Any death or serious injury where the agency's Tactical Support Unit was deployed;
  - d. Any "officer involved" incident where an officer has been injured and/or has discharged his/her weapon in defense of him/herself or in the defense of another; and
  - e. Any vehicle accident in which an Olathe Police Department member has been seriously injured or killed.
2. The Peer Support Program Manager shall appoint a member of the Peer Support Advisory committee to serve in his/her place if the Peer Support Program Manager shall not be available at any specific time. The Peer Support Program Manager will notify the Chief of Police of the designated Peer Support Program Manager.

### **Peer Support Advisory Committee**

1. The Chief of Police shall create a Peer Support Advisory Committee for the purpose of administering the program. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall consist of the Chief of Police, at least one mental health professional, the Peer Support Program Manager, and one designee assigned by each of the Bureau Commanders (Operations and Administration).
2. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall meet quarterly or at the request of the Peer Support Program Manager, the Chief of Police, or when two or more members of the Peer Support Advisory Committee request a meeting. If requested, the meeting shall be called within 30 days, or sooner, if needed.

3. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall:
  - a. Establish and review Peer Support training requirements;
  - b. Attend training when practical;
  - c. Establish, review and revise the Peer Support Programs procedures;
  - d. Select Peer Supporters through an application process;
  - e. Ensure compliance with the program's procedure governing confidentiality;
  - f. Provide administration with periodic reports of program activities;
  - g. Remove Peer Supporters from the program when necessary;
  - h. Provide program awareness through member orientation and training; and
  - i. Identify local community resources that may support the program purpose and goals.

### **Peer Support Psychologist**

1. The Peer Support Program Psychologist will be a person whose background and practice includes extensive experience working with law enforcement officers and the unique problems associated with the law enforcement profession. The Peer Support Program Psychologist's responsibilities include:
  - a. Serving on the Peer Support Advisory Committee;
  - b. Provide instruction for Peer Support training program; and
  - c. Attend quarterly meetings whenever possible and acting as an advisor to Peer Supporters.

### **Peer Support Program Manager**

1. The Peer Support Program Manager, designated by the Chief of Police, acts as the primary liaison between the Peer Supporters, the Peer Support Advisory Committee, resource persons and programs and the Olathe Police Department.
2. The Peer Support Program Manager reports only to the Chief of Police on issues, concerns, training needs and any other business pertaining to the operation of the program.
3. Major responsibilities of the Peer Support Program Manager include:
  - a. Daily supervision of the program;
  - b. Serving as chairperson of the Peer Support Advisory Committee;
  - c. Recruiting and coordinating the screening of Peer Support applicants;
  - d. Coordinating training of the Peer Supporters;
  - e. Developing resources to assist members when problem areas are identified;
  - f. Maintaining general statistical data of reported contacts by Peer Supporters;
  - g. Maintaining records of expenses associated with the program;
  - h. Offering guidance to Peer Supporters as needed; and

- i. Maintaining and distributing to all members a current Peer Supporter list.

### **Peer Supporter Personnel**

1. All interested members who choose to volunteer as a Peer Supporter must submit their written request through his/her chain of command to the Peer Support Program Manager.
2. Applicants must:
  - a. Agree to maintain confidentiality within the guidelines provided in the confidentiality section of this procedure.
    - b. Have no restrictions regarding psychological stress;
    - c. Not be the subject of an investigation or pending disciplinary action;
    - d. Have written endorsement by his/her immediate supervisor;
    - e. Be empathetic and possess strong interpersonal and communication skills;
  - f. Successfully pass a structured oral interview before the Peer Support Advisory Committee;
  - g. Attend and successfully complete the training program, which will focus on:
    1. Effective listening;
    2. General assessment skills;
    3. Problem solving skills;
    4. Relationship termination (death, divorce, etc...);
    5. Referral and follow-up.
  - h. Be willing to attend follow-up training;
  - i. Be willing to attend and successfully complete the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation basic 16 hour debriefing training.
3. The Peer Support Advisory Committee will select candidates suited for appointment as Peer Supporters.
4. Peer Supporter's responsibilities will include:
  - a. Providing support and assistance on a voluntary basis to fellow members and/or their families in time of personal and/or professional crises;
  - b. Convey trust, anonymity and assure confidentiality within this procedure to members who seek assistance from the Peer Support Program;
  - c. Assist the member by referring him/her to the appropriate outside resource when necessary;
  - d. Maintain contact with the Peer support Program Manager regarding program activities;
  - e. Be available to be contacted and, if practical, to respond at any hour; and

- f. Attend quarterly trainings and if unable to attend, must submit, in writing, a memo to be approved by the Peer Support Advisory Committee.
5. Peer Supporters may voluntarily withdraw from participation at any time. They are, however, required to notify the Peer Support Program Manager in writing.
6. Peer Supporters may be removed from participation in the program by the Peer Support Advisory Committee for:
  - a. Conduct inconsistent with the program procedure;
  - b. Failure to fulfill training requirements and/or attend quarterly meetings; and
  - c. Unsatisfactory work performance.
7. Peer Supporters in good standing may ask the Peer Support Advisory Committee, in writing, to place them on inactive status. The requester explains why the request is being made.
8. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall determine the period of inactive status, which may be granted for a period up to 2 years.
9. To be reinstated to active status, the member shall make a written request to the Peer Support Advisory Committee. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall either deny or approve the request. Upon approval, the member shall be informed of what training is required for reinstatement.

### **Rules and Regulations**

1. Upon activation, the Peer Supporter should notify their immediate supervisor as to their assignment.
2. The following guidelines provide the Peer Supporter's formal authority to obtain certain organizational resources and support he/she needs to assist peer members:
  - a. Lodging and per diem expenses may be provided for training, workshop attendance and assignment referrals to work locations outside the Peer Supporter's currently assigned location. All such activity is subject to prior authorization by the Chief of Police or program manager; and
  - b. The Peer Supporter is permitted to consult with employees off duty with advance notice to the Peer Support Program Manager and/or the Chief of Police.
3. Participation in the Peer Support Program is strictly voluntary. Overtime and/or compensatory time are authorized for time expended by employees using the program or by personnel performing Peer Support duties.
4. Peer Support Team Members are allowed to consult with employees while on duty with approval from their immediate supervisor. Absent exigent circumstances,

supervisors shall categorically grant such approval. No names or personal identifiers will be given to the supervisor.

5. Agency facilities may be utilized for peer support activities when available.
6. Agency vehicles may be used in conjunction with peer support activities, in accordance with Olathe Police Department Policy.

### **Confidentiality**

1. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained between the Peer Supporter and the counselee in accordance with the provisions of this procedure.
2. Peer Supporters should inform the person, prior to discussion, of the confidentiality limitations and exceptions. Peer Supporters should consult with the Peer Support Program Manager or the psychologist in those cases where a concern or question regarding confidentiality arises.
3. When the Peer Supporter is assisting an employee who is or becomes the subject of an internal investigation, the Peer Supporter should adhere to the confidentiality procedure set forth herein:
  - a. A Peer Supporter should not volunteer any information received in confidence;
  - b. A Peer Supporter should not hamper or impede the actual investigation, or attempt to shelter the employee from the investigation; and
  - c. The Peer Supporter's role should be one of support and assistance for employees experiencing the stress of an internal investigation.
4. Information divulged to a Peer Supporter concerning the following matters shall not be held confidential:
  - a. Any criminal offenses;
  - b. Danger to self;
  - c. Danger to others; and
  - d. When divulgence is requested by the peer.
5. Peer Supporters who report any of the listed matters above shall not serve on any investigation team appointed to investigate any allegation.