

**Post Incident Defuse & Critical  
Incident Debrief**

**STANDING ORDER 16/7**

**December 2014**  
**Employee Relations**  
**Service Support: Employee Relations**

# WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

## CRITICAL INCIDENT & POST INCIDENT DIFUSE DEBRIEF

### Post incident Defusing and Critical Incident Debrief

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## **2. WHAT IS A POST INCIDENT DEBRIEF AND WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEF**

This policy of West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) is to ensure that full care provision is available to all employees in any critical incident/trauma situation.

These debriefs are to help minimise any effects that may occur during or after any critical incidents that take place (see definition below).

WMFS as an employer has the responsibility to ensure that all employees receive the right levels of support when experiencing any critical incidents.

The Service has a duty of care to provide employees with post incident defusing and an after critical incident debrief, with the employees consent.

- **PID** – Post Incident Defuse
- **CID** – Critical Incident Debrief

### **2.1 Definition of post incident defusing?**

This is an intervention provided by trained Flexi Duty System (FDS) officers either at scene or on return to station immediately following a critical incident, PID is designed to highlight any potential after effects of the critical incident and to provide early sign posting to additional support for all employees involved. A CID will also be offered at this point

### **2.2 Definition of a Critical Incident?**

Any event or experience which is outside the normal range of work experience.

Any event which produces normal reactions to an abnormal situation.

## **3. STRATEGY**

The Service has in place a facility to help mitigate against the potential effects of a critical incident, and this is done by providing all employees with post incident defusing where an FDS officer will attend the incident or nearby station.

After the incident, all employees who were involved in the incident will be offered the option of a critical incident debrief, this session is run by volunteers who have been fully trained to carry out these debriefs.

This care facility is available to all employees however, this session is not mandatory but attendance or non attendance will be logged and records sent to Occupational Health (OH).

Detailed in this policy is guidance that will ensure that all employees have a clear understanding of the purpose of CID and PID and their responsibilities in respect of these sessions.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 When does a Post Incident Defuse occur?**

When an incident is deemed as critical or the Incident Commander (IC) feels employees are facing stressful or traumatic events, the IC or Fire Control may request a PID officer to attend the scene or a nearby station.

Once mobilised the PID officer will make contact with the IC to ascertain the best location for Defusing, this will be agreed by both the IC and PID officer. Fire control will be informed of the location by the PID officer.

### **4.2 What is a Critical Incident Debrief (CID)?**

Critical incident debrief is a care provision which is intended to complement existing support provisions currently available to all employees within WMFS. CID is intended to mitigate against the potential ill effects of a critical incident by means of a structured procedure which utilises confidential peer support.

The objective of this session is to allow the group of affected employees to share and discuss any subsequent traumatic or emotional reactions following the critical incident.

A CID will be led by a team of fully trained volunteers.

Other than the volunteers, the only employees who can attend a CID are those who attended the incident or event which will be the subject of the CID.

A CID will be initiated in one of two ways, namely:

- **An automatic CID.** There are occasions when a CID will be automatic, and will be carried out by the trained employee.
- **A requested debrief.** This will occur when any employee who attended an incident, which is not encompassed within the automatic list, feels a debrief would be of benefit. There are no timeframes for this, an employee can request for a CID to take place as a One-2-One meeting at any time after the incident.

CID IS NOT COUNSELLING.

CID IS NOT AN OPERATIONAL DEBRIEF.

### **4.3 When does a CID occur automatically?**

A CID would be mandatory following the death or serious injury of a colleague on duty.

### **4.4 Who attends an Automatic CID?**

On the occasions when an automatic CID is required, all employees who attended the Critical Incident will be informed that a debrief has been arranged, and given the opportunity to attend if they choose to.

Any employee of the Service can request a debrief for themselves or their watch or department. If you feel you need a debrief or feel that any other employee would benefit from a debrief, contact with the on duty incident room manager via fire control.

### **4.5 Who attends a 'Requested Debrief'?**

When a debrief has been requested, all employees who attended the incident or event will be invited to attend the debrief, attendance is not compulsory

### **4.6 When and where will a Debrief take Place?**

A CID should take place between 24 and 72 hours after the event or incident occurred/request for a CID was made. This may not always be possible when taking into account rota and leave.

A debrief will normally take place at the employees home station, providing a room which ensures privacy can be provided.

### **4.7 Is a Critical Incident Debrief confidential?**

Aspects of Critical Incident Debriefing are confidential; however, the volunteer who is conducting the session will need to keep a record of names attended. These names will be sent to OH for employees records. Anything discussed in the debrief will remain confidential within the normal rules of confidentiality.

All trained volunteers have agreed to abide by a code of ethics and practices concerning CID, ensuring absolute confidentiality to all employees who participate in a debrief.

All requests for a debrief will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Any notes made by volunteers to assist the debrief will be destroyed at the end of the debrief, in the presence of the group, unless the employees request further actions, this is agreed by all parties at the debrief.

### **4.8 Who are the trained Volunteers and what Training do they receive?**

Each CID will be led by a CID team of between 2 and 3 volunteers. Post diffuse will be conducted by Station/Watch commanders or supervisors. Debrief volunteers will be drawn from all areas of WMFS

All debriefer's are fully trained to carry out any role in a CID.

CID volunteers who are employees of the Service and are called upon to assist with a debriefing or to take part in training will be released from their normal duties, subject to the exigencies of the Service.

Any member of the Service can apply to become a debriefer via their line manager and by contacting the lead CID officer.

#### **4.9 What actually happens at a Debrief?**

A CID takes form of a structured meeting, There is no set time limit to the length of the debrief, as this is dependant upon the employees input. CID teams will guide employees through the process.

During a debrief, the debriefer will lead the session with a group discussion. The facilitator will put forward the facts related to the critical incident i.e. if there were any fatal injuries or any bereavement caused during the incident. Once the facts have been provided, the facilitator will allow the group to share any thoughts and experiences.

The aim of this group discussion is to allow the affected employees to share their experiences and emotions experienced since the event.

During the debrief, employees are not forced to say anything, but they are expected to state their name and the role which they played in the incident or event. Everybody is given an equal opportunity to contribute.

#### **4.10 On Duty Employee**

For the duration of a CID, on duty employees taking part will not be available for emergency calls or other duties.

#### **4.11 Off Duty Employees**

Off duty employees will be entitled to the provisions set out in the following Standing Orders:

- [Standing Order 3/3](#), Overtime
- Standing Order 3/4, Allowances for Traveling Expenses

### **5. CROSS REFERENCES**

[Standing Order 3/3](#), Overtime

Standing Order 3/4, Allowances for Traveling Expenses

### **6. KEY CONSULTEES**

Op's

Top's

Joint Consultative Committee

Joint working party, which includes FOA and Trade Unions

HR Service Support

HR Employee Relations

Occupational Health Team

### **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This policy has been shared with Equality & Diversity team, as no major changes were made; EIA has been completed and sent to the Equality team.

### **8. OWNERSHIP**

This Standing Order did not require Corporate Board or Authority approval.

### **9. RESPONSIBILITY & REVIEW/AMENDMENT DETAILS**

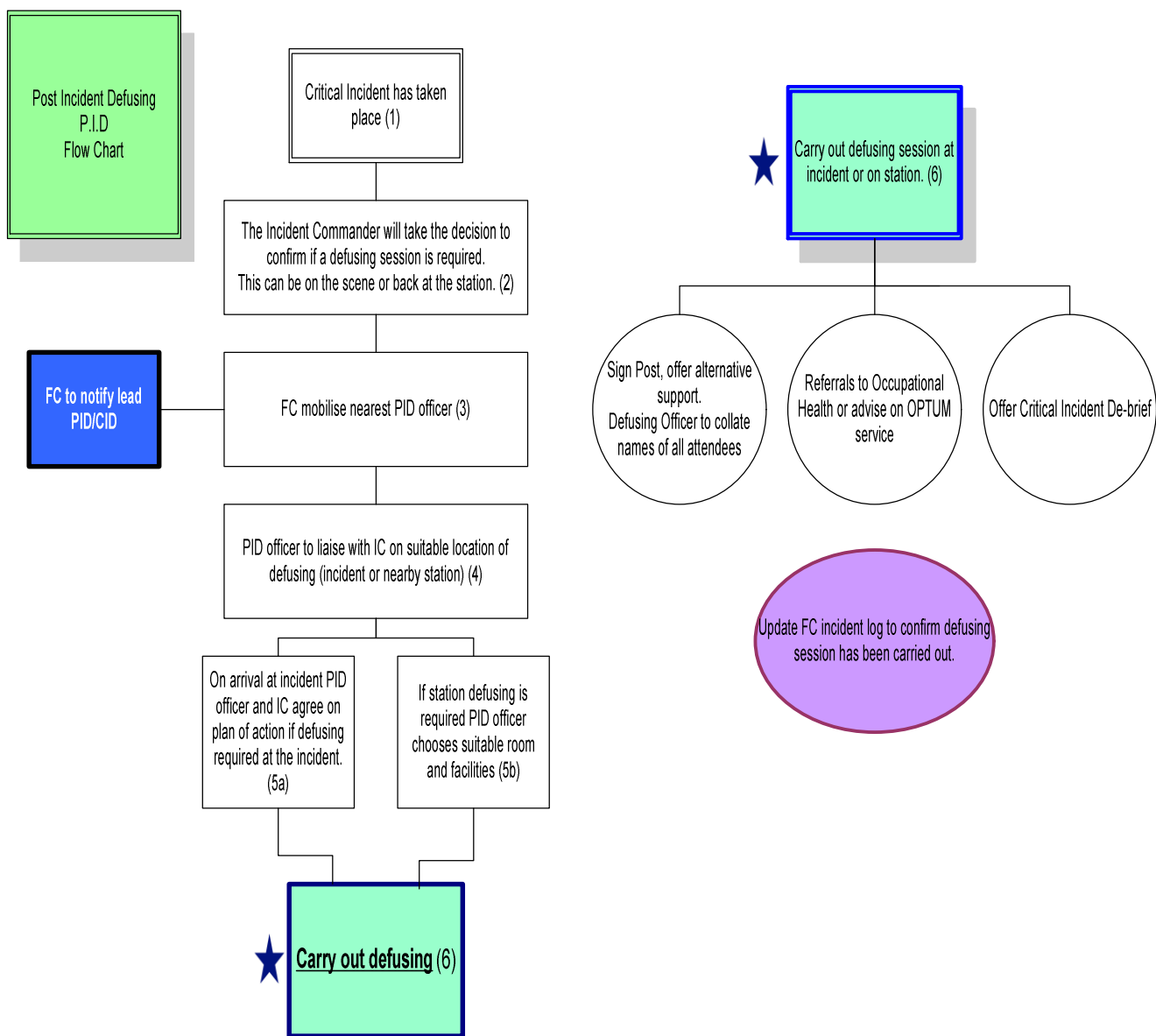
#### **9.1 Responsible Corporate Board Member/Department**

Strategic Enabler HR/People Support Services.

#### **9.2 Created/fully reviewed/amended**

Created by Employee Relations December 2014

## POST INCIDENT DEFUSING PROCESS FLOW



## CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEF PROCESS FLOW

