
	<b>ROSENBERG POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>	
	<b>General Order 1.06 Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers</b>	
	<b>Effective Date: 9-1-2021</b>	<b>Replaces: N/A</b>
	<b>Approved:</b>  Chief of Police	
	<b>Reference: N/A</b>	

**Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in following Section 614.015 of the Texas Government Code regarding the use of mental health leave for peace officers. Mental health leave will support staff in maintaining a healthy state of mind while at work and at home. The City of Rosenberg recognizes that mental health is just as important as maintaining physical health. The City supports establishing a workplace that is comfortable, healthy, safe and supportive.

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. Traumatic event – an event which occurs in the peace officer(s) scope of employment when the officer is involved in the response to, or investigation of, an event that causes the officer to experience unusually strong emotional reactions or feelings which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function during or after the incident.

Traumatic events may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Major disasters which may include response to weather related events involving multiple casualties; or explosions with multiple casualties; or search and recovery missions involving multiple casualties.
- b. Incidents involving multiple casualties which may include shootings or traffic accidents.
- c. Line of duty death, suicide, or catastrophic illness of a co-worker.
- d. Death of a child resulting from violence or neglect.
- e. Officer(s) involved shooting of a person.
- f. Any investigation by an officer involving abuse of individuals.

2. Mental health leave – administrative leave with pay granted in response to a traumatic event that occurred in the scope of the peace officer’s employment.

3. Mental Health Professional – a licensed social or mental health worker, counselor, psychotherapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.

#### **I. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY**

An officer directly involved in a traumatic event may request the use of mental health leave. The request shall be made in writing and sent directly to the Chief of Police and HR Director. The request shall be treated as a priority matter and a decision on the granting of the leave shall be made no later than 24 hours following the submission of the request. The request shall be granted unless the chain of command can articulate specific compelling reasons to deny granting the leave.

A supervisor or coworker who becomes aware of behavioral changes in an officer directly involved in a traumatic event should suggest to the officer that he or she seek mental health leave and the assistance of a mental health professional. An officer's failure to voluntarily seek mental health assistance shall be addressed by Rosenberg Police Department General Order 2.05 titled Employee Discipline; specifically, regarding relief from duty.

#### **II. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any request for mental health leave shall be treated as strictly confidential by all parties involved and shall not be discussed or disclosed outside the officer's immediate chain of command, and only as necessary to facilitate the use of the leave. Any officer or supervisor who becomes aware of behavioral changes and suggests the officer seek mental health leave shall not discuss that matter with any third party. Any breach of this confidentiality shall be grounds for discipline.

Confidentiality may be waived by the officer seeking mental health leave. Confidentiality may be waived under circumstances which indicate the officer is a danger to himself or herself or others and department personnel must confer with mental health professionals.

#### **III. DURATION**

An officer directly involved in a traumatic event may request up to 40 hours of mental health leave.

Extensions of mental health leave may be available under certain circumstances. Any request for an extension shall be accompanied by documentation from a mental health professional who is counseling the officer. The request may extend the leave by 40 hours. Each officer may request no more than one extension. The Chief shall grant the extension upon the receipt of sufficient documentation explain the need for the extension.

#### **IV. EFFECT ON PAID LEAVE BALANCES**

Consistent with Section 614.015 of the Texas Government Code, mental health leave will not be deducted from normally accrued employee benefits.

## **V. SERVICES AVAILABLE**

The Rosenberg Police Department will provide Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) sessions for employees involved in a traumatic incident. Employees are given access to individual counseling services through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by the City of Rosenberg Human Resources Department.