

<b>FREWSBURG FIRE DISTRICT</b>  <b>OPERATIONAL POLICY</b>	Section 4	HEALTH AND SAFETY	
	SUBJECT	CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT	
	Policy 4-08	PAGE 1 OF 2	DATE: 01-01-2023

## I. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Frewsburg Fire District members. It shall be the responsibility of all officers to ensure this policy is adhered to.

## II. PURPOSE

The Frewsburg Fire District acknowledges that our members may encounter tragic/traumatic situations while operating at emergency incidents that may cause elevated stress levels. This policy establishes the procedure for seeking help for our members to cope with traumatic experiences.

## III. POLICY

1. It shall be the policy of the Frewsburg Fire District to initiate a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing when a specific, significant incident is identified as a traumatic stress-related experience.
  - A. Any event that causes normal, healthy people to have unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function at an emergency scene or at a later time, should be considered a Critical Incident.
2. Critical Incident Debriefing is not a critique of fire department operations. Performance issues shall not be discussed during debriefing. The process provides formats in which personnel can discuss their feelings and personal reactions to an event, thus reducing the stress which results from critical exposures. All debriefings shall be held strictly confidential.
3. Fire personnel shall be alerted to recognize and promptly report any incident or changes in behavior which may adversely affect Frewsburg Fire District members.
4. The Chief Officers shall be responsible for immediately reporting an event, situation or behavior which may indicate the need for Critical Incident Debriefing.

## IV. PROCEDURE:

1. Any officer of the department may initiate a Critical Incident Debriefing by notifying the Fire Chief and activating the County Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).
  - A. For CISM activation, call Chautauqua County Dispatch at 716-753-4231 or contact a dispatcher directly via fire radio.

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2. The Chief Officer shall advise the CISM team coordinator of any actions taken because of the incident such as removing companies from service or recommending debriefings for select individuals.
3. All personnel involved in a critical incident may be required to attend the scheduled debriefing.
4. Upon notification of the CISM team, the chief officer shall discuss the situation with the team coordinator to initiate actions appropriate to the incident and to assure that all affected members receive proper care.
5. Critical Incident Debriefings shall be conducted in a location remote from the incident scene and in an area that will comfortably accommodate all personnel.
6. Group and/or individual debriefings shall be held in strict confidence.
7. Any discussions, opinions, or observations associated with a Critical Incident Debriefing shall not result in any disciplinary action by the fire department.