

# **Waltham Police Department**

## **EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **CHAPTER 22**

*General Order #: GO-02*

*Effective Date: 03/2012, 02/2016, 2/2020*

*Accreditation Standard #'s: 22.2.2, 22.2.3, 22.2.7*

#### **POLICY [22.2.7A]:**

Members of the Waltham Police Department are entitled to benefits from many Sources. [22.2.7D] In some cases, benefits are regulated by State or Federal Law, City Ordinance or collective bargaining agreements. In others cases benefits are the result of programs sponsored by service organizations or employee organizations.

The Waltham Police Department feels that sworn and civilian members are entitled to support for stress related matters and believes that their family members should be assisted in matters relating to their death or serious injury.

Because of the variety and in many cases the complexity of these entitlements, the Waltham Police Department has established an Employee Support Services Unit. It is the policy of this Unit to work in conjunction with Police Administration, The Waltham Police Relief Association, or any other Department related organization, in providing services to its members and their families in obtaining the benefits that they have earned and are entitled to.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Employee Support Services Unit is as follows:
  - a. Provide members with information regarding benefits they are entitled to while serving as active members of the department.
  - b. Provide members with information regarding retirement or disability.
  - c. Provide support for officers regarding stress related matters.
  - d. Provide support and information to the families of deceased or injured members.
2. **ORGANIZATION:** The Chief of Police shall designate a member of no lesser rank than sergeant as Officer in Charge of the unit. The department stress officer(s) shall also be members of the unit. Other members may be assigned as needed. Members of the unit are to gain as much expertise concerning the availability and application for available benefits as possible. They shall identify and establish contacts with

individuals offering assistance in these matters and shall call on these resources as needed.

In addition, members of the unit shall establish liaison with department organizations such as collective bargaining units and the Waltham Police Association in order to better serve the membership.

3. **FUNCTION OF UNIT:**

- a. Compile and maintain information regarding employee benefits.
- b. Advise employees upon request regarding employee benefits.
- c. Initiate the dissemination of related information as deemed appropriate.
- d. Assist officers by arranging for the provision of stress counseling, and psychological counseling when requested, either internally or through outside resources. [22.2.7A,D]
- e. Assist the families of deceased or injured members, by lending the support and sympathy of the department in time of need, and by ensuring that they obtain all benefits they are entitled to, internally or through outside resources. [22.2.7D]

4. **BENEFITS/ ACTIVE MEMBERS:** The Employee Support Services Unit will provide information to members including but not limited to the following:

- a. City sponsored health insurance programs [22.2.2-2].
- b. City sponsored life insurance programs.
- c. Deferred compensation program.
- d. Direct deposit program.
- e. Salary and benefits mandated by contract.
- f. Police association benefits.
- g. Benefits offered by private organizations.
- h. Stress program.

5. **BENEFITS/MEMBERS PLANNING RETIREMENT:** [22.2.2-1] The unit will provide information to members who are planning or contemplating

retirement. Such information may include but is not limited to.

- a. Information concerning the different retirement plans.
- b. Information related to disability pensions.
- c. Information regarding the Waltham Police Association benefits.

6. **STRESS RELATED MATTERS:** The Department shall designate and arrange for the training of no less than one officer as the department's stress officer. **[22.2.7H]** This officer shall by virtue of his position be a member of the unit. The stress officer, under the directing of the Supervisor of Emergency Support Services shall make himself available to assist members in dealing with stress and emotional related matters. The guidelines below include but are not limited to the following courses of action **[22.2.7G]**:

- a. The stress officer shall advise and assist members in need of his services.
- b. He shall be knowledgeable about the availability of support groups and shall recommend them as appropriate.
- c. He shall assist members in arranging for psychological counseling when requested.
- d. Members of the department are eligible for voluntary, confidential psychological treatment. No department records will be maintained regarding any such treatment nor will any disciplinary action result from a member seeking such voluntary treatment. The existence of such treatment shall be a matter of the strictest confidence. The doctor/patient privilege of confidentiality shall be totally honored. **[22.2.7C]**
- e. The stress officer shall keep in strictest confidence all information that comes to his attention as a result of his position. **[22.2.7C]**
- f. Stress Officers shall be notified in the event of a critical incident and (i.e., sudden deaths of children, homicides, motor vehicle fatalities, etc.). In the event of a critical incident, The Greater Boston Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) shall be notified. This is done by advising the OIC of the Waltham Stress unit who shall notify the CISM. **[22.2.7D]** Critical Incident CISM protocol is in WPD Share/Stress Unit.
- g. Although there are instances when referral to the stress unit may be mandatory, in most cases, the officer will seek assistance on their own. These instances include but are not limited to Officer involved

death/traumatic injury (reference Chapter 1B), as a result of disciplinary measure/agreement, when a supervisor or Stress Unit official feels that officer may be a danger to himself or someone else, and any other unforeseen instance. [22.2.7E,F] If one of these instances is a critical incident, the OIC of the stress unit shall be notified and will activate the protocol for Greater Boston Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).[22.2.7D]

- h. Supervisors who feel an individual is in need of service or have been approached by an individual requesting services, should immediately page or phone the OIC of the Employee Support Services Unit or a designee of the ESS Unit in the event the OIC of the Unit is unavailable. [22.2.7B] **A list of Stress Officers and phone numbers are listed in the QED computer program and in the WPD Emergency Special Operations Manual.**
- i. The City of Waltham has an Employee Support Service Unit available to all City of Waltham Employees. This is separate from the Waltham Police Department Employee Support Services Unit. If an employee wishes to activate this service, he/she should contact the City of Waltham Personnel Director who will arrange for service. **City of Waltham Personnel Department phone # is (781) 314-3360.**

*All Phone numbers pertaining to the ESS, including the Waltham Police Chaplain are posted in a conspicuous spot in the Guardroom.*

- j. Police Officers are two to three times more likely to die from suicide than from line of duty death. According to the National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation this has a lot to do with the high stress of policing, along with a lack of awareness and prevention education. The mission of the foundation is to help save the lives of police officers at risk through training programs and support services. The National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation website (<http://www.psf.org/>) has great resources. The Foundation also has a 24-hour hotline for officers in distress (1-866-276-4615).

- 7. **SUPPORT TO FAMILIES OF DECEASED MEMBERS:** [22.2.2-3] In an effort to assist the families of deceased members to the fullest extent possible, the total resources of the unit shall be made available in this time of need. Members of the unit shall make every effort to provide both emotional and financial support.

- a. Emotional support available may include but is not limited to:
  - 1. Assisting in the planning and arranging of funerals as requested.
  - 2. The provision of stress counseling.
  - 3. The arranging of religious support.

- b.** Financial support shall involve assisting the family in identifying and obtaining all entitlements available including but not limited to:
  - 1.** Insurance benefits.
  - 2.** Association benefits.
  - 3.** Veteran's benefits.
  - 4.** Social security benefits.
  - 5.** Pension benefits.