



## **21st JUDICIAL DISTRICT CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM PROTOCOL**

It is the consensus of law enforcement agencies in the 21st Judicial District that a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) should be formed, to preserve objectivity and impartiality in any investigation involving the use of deadly force by a peace officer and for compliance with C.R.S. § 16-2.5-301. This Team shall be made up of highly trained and skilled investigators from various law enforcement agencies within the 21st Judicial District. The Team shall be formed to investigate incidents in which any law enforcement officer within the district uses deadly physical force under the color of official law enforcement duties. The team can also be utilized, however, for any special investigation or criminal incident requiring unusual investigative resources. The CIRT shall ensure that a neutral, impartial and thorough criminal investigation of these incidents is conducted.

The following protocol should be considered a guideline. Where investigative techniques are described, they are intended to be used as an aid and to add consistency to an investigation. It is not the intent that this protocol mandates any action that would be contrary to any policy or procedure of any member agency, or any applicable local or state law.

## I. Definitions

### "Actor"

A person whose act is a "proximate cause" of a fatal injury or injury which poses a substantial risk of death to another person or a person who intends that his/her act be the "proximate cause" of serious bodily injury or death to another person and this act does cause death or serious bodily injury to another.

### "Administrative Investigators"

Investigators assigned by the Employer Agency to conduct the administrative investigation of the incident, sometimes also referred to as internal affairs investigators.

### "Case Agent"

The lead investigator from any Member Agency other than the Employer Agency responsible for directing, managing, coordinating, and assigning investigative duties.

### "CIRT Coordinator"

A single member of each Member Agency, designated by the Member Agency's chief executive, who is charged with coordinating the efforts of CIRT.

### "CIRT Investigators"

Investigators assigned by the agencies who are members of this agreement.

### "CIRT Liaison"

A member of the Employer Agency assigned to observe all stages of the CIRT Investigation, but who does not participate in the investigatory process.

### "Deadly Physical Force"

A level of force used which involves a probable consequence or likelihood to cause death.

### "Employer Agency"

The agency employing and/or affiliated with the involved law enforcement employee(s) or with which he/she is affiliated.

"Fatal Injury"

An injury from which death occurs.

"Investigative Agency"

A law enforcement agency within whose geographical jurisdiction the incident occurs and who has jurisdiction to investigate the incident.

"Member Agency"

The law enforcement agencies which are signatory to this CIRT agreement.

"Officer-Involved Fatal/Near Fatal incidents"

An event occurring involving two or more persons in which a Member Agency employee is involved as an actor, victim or custodial officer, where a fatal injury or an injury where a substantial risk of death occurs, or involves a law enforcement discharge of a firearm which results in any injury. Such incidents include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Intentional and/or accidental discharge of a firearm, including law enforcement tactical incidents involving specialized response teams.
- 2) Intentional and/or accidental use of any other dangerous or deadly weapon.
- 3) Assaults resulting in death or a substantial risk of death upon law enforcement officers and assaults on other law enforcement employees who are on duty or are acting for a law enforcement purpose.
- 4) Any fatal injury occurring in law enforcement custody.
- 5) Any fatal injury to a person who is a passenger of a law enforcement officer (such as a ride-a-long, emergency transports, etc.).
- 6) Vehicular collisions, which may include but are not limited to:
  - Any fatal injury or injury causing a substantial risk of death

which occurs after, although not necessarily as a proximate cause of, law enforcement discharge of a firearm directed at the suspect or the suspect vehicle.

- Law enforcement pursuits where the suspect vehicle, which is being pursued by a law enforcement vehicle(s), collides with another vehicle, a pedestrian, or an object, and causes death or substantial risk of death.
- Law enforcement pursuits where the law enforcement vehicle collides with another vehicle, a pedestrian, or an object, and causes death or a substantial risk of death.
- Vehicle accidents (non-pursuits) involving law enforcement vehicles where death or substantial risk of death occurs.

#### "Agency Employee"

This protocol applies to employees and to certain other people affiliated with the law enforcement agencies, which are members of this policy agreement, as follows:

- 1) Full-time and part-time employees, whether on-duty or off-duty, engaged in a law enforcement function become involved in a crime in progress and acting for a law enforcement agency at the time of the incident.
- 2) Temporary employees and volunteers whether paid or unpaid, who are on-duty or who are acting for a law enforcement purpose at the time of the incident. This category includes informants when they are working under the direct control and supervision of a law enforcement officer.

#### "Proximate Cause"

An act from which an injury results as a natural and direct consequence and without which the injury would not have occurred.

#### "Serious Bodily Injury"

An injury that poses substantial risk of death, serious permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any part or organ of the body. This may include breaks, fractures, or burns of the second or third degree.

#### "Subject"

The person(s) who is/are injured by the act of the actor, whether or not it is intentional. When used in this policy, this word does not imply existence of

criminality but rather is used to designate the person(s) who is/are physically injured.

## II. Critical Incident Response Team Protocol

The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) concept has been implemented in the 21st Judicial District to aid and assist agencies investigating peace officer involved fatal or near fatal incidents. Peace officers are unique because society has granted peace officers the power and authority to use deadly force. Stringent laws and guidelines related to the use of deadly force ensure that peace officers do not abuse the power that has been granted to them by our free society.

This unique power presents challenges to agencies that are tasked with investigating use of deadly force incidents. It is the intention of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) to make these investigations less traumatic for the involved peace officer(s), their agency, and the community they serve. It is not the intent of the members of this protocol to mandate any action that would be contrary to any policy or procedure of any member agency. The pooling of investigative resources can reduce the time that it takes to complete these investigations and reach closure for the peace officer, the agency, the community, as well as other involved parties, without sacrificing investigative integrity. The Critical Incident Response Team shall be staffed with experienced and highly trained investigators supported by their respective agencies.

When activated, the Critical Incident Response Team shall respond, investigate, and present the facts in the most expeditious manner possible.

## III. Procedures

The CIRT is available to all participating law enforcement agencies within the 21st Judicial District to assist the Employer Agency with any applicable investigation.

The chief executive of the Employer Agency shall make a request for activation of CIRT to the chief executive of the Investigative Agency. The CIRT shall then only be activated upon the direction of the Investigative Agency's chief executive or their designee.

Upon activation, the CIRT operates under the authority of the Investigative Agency and as such shall report to the chief executive of the Investigative Agency. This shall require the CIRT Coordinator to keep the Investigative Agency CEO apprised of investigations plans and strategies, findings, reports and other critical information in a timely manner.

The CIRT shall investigate and present fact-finding reports to the Employer Agency, the Investigative Agency and, where appropriate, the District Attorney's Office. This shall be the sole responsibility of the CIRT unless otherwise directed by the Investigative Agency's chief executive or their designee.

All existing procedures regarding notification of the District Attorney's Office following a

peace officer's use of deadly physical force shall apply and be followed precisely as well as the notification of the coroner's office, if applicable.

The CIRT Coordinator is responsible for coordinating, at a minimum, one full team meeting a year to review protocol, review incidents, and to discuss training needs.

#### IV. **Personnel**

The CIRT shall consist of peace officers and ancillary personnel designated by the chief executive of each Member Agency within the 21st Judicial District. Each member shall serve at the discretion of the appointing or current chief executive. A Member Agency's chief executive may remove their member at any time.

The use of non-CIRT investigators to supplement official CIRT members can be authorized by the CIRT Coordinator on an as-needed basis, given the approval of the Investigative Agency's chief executive.

#### V. **Notification**

Requests for the CIRT's assistance shall be made as soon as possible by the chief executive of the Employer Agency to the chief executive of the Investigative Agency.

Upon activation, the CIRT Coordinator for the Investigative Agency, or designee, shall decide what personnel and equipment shall be needed for the investigation and contact the necessary members of the CIRT with response instructions.

The Investigative Agency's CIRT Coordinator shall assess the details of the incident and shall select and assign a Case Agent.

#### VI. **Equipment/Personnel/Associated Investigative Costs**

All necessary equipment shall be supplied by the Investigative Agency. If additional or specialized equipment is needed, the cost of obtaining such equipment shall be borne by the Investigative Agency upon approval of the Investigating Agency's chief executive. This does not prohibit any individual team member from bringing any piece of equipment he/she deems necessary, providing the Investigative Agency deems such equipment appropriate.

The decision to initiate any specialized testing shall be made in collaboration with the Employer Agency. The Employer Agency shall be responsible for any costs pertaining to these tests.

All associated personnel costs shall be the responsibility of the Member Agency providing the CIRT Investigators to the team; those costs shall not be the responsibility of the Employer Agency. Any other personnel costs shall be approved by the Employer Agency prior to being incurred.

All CIRT Investigators, while responding to a call out, regardless of jurisdiction, shall be deemed to be on duty and responding to a call of mutual aid.

## VII. Investigative Responsibilities

To properly recognize and accommodate the various interests and rules of law or agency policy which may be involved in any incident, investigations of these matters shall be performed under two separate investigative formats - the Administrative Investigation and the Criminal Investigation.

### The Administrative Investigation

The administrative investigation is to be conducted by the Employer Agency and is subordinate to the Criminal Investigation in all aspects. The scope of the Criminal Investigative process is generally broad enough to cover most information needed in the Administrative Investigation and is deliberately structured to recognize and accommodate the interests of the Administrative Investigation.

Criminal investigators shall share information with Administrative Investigation personnel. Absent the limited purposes allowed by law, Criminal Investigators shall ensure they do not receive any information by any means that is the result of the Administrative Investigation.

### The Criminal Investigation

The Criminal Investigation has investigative priority over the Administrative Investigation and it begins immediately after an incident has occurred.

This investigation is performed by the CIRT which is made up of CIRT Investigators from the Member Agencies. The CIRT Coordinator shall designate a Case Agent from an agency other than the Employer Agency. The Employer Agency shall designate a singular CIRT Liaison, who may observe all components of the CIRT Investigation.

Members of the Employer Agency shall not participate in the CIRT Investigation unless authorized by the Investigating Agency. It is in the best interest of the investigation to limit the Employer Agency's members' involvement in the investigation in order to maintain objectivity and impartiality. However, each Member Agency may have specialized equipment and/or personnel that may be utilized for a special need in an investigation. In a case where the Employer Agency has equipment and/or personnel which may assist with the needs of any particular investigation, an Employer Agency may offer, or an Investigating Agency may request, the Employer Agency's equipment and/or personnel to participate in the

CIRT Investigation. In these event that the Employer Agency's personnel participate in the investigation, each member of the Employer Agency shall have oversight by a CIRT Investigator from a different Member Agency to preserve objectivity and impartiality.

### Scene Security

Member Agencies have initial responsibility for immediately securing crime scene(s) within their respective jurisdictions. This responsibility includes preservation of the integrity of the scene(s) and contents, access control, and the identification and sequestration of witnesses, along with stabilizing any life-threatening injuries or other situations. Responsibility may be changed as the investigation progresses, given appropriate and available staffing.

### Crime/Incident Scene

The scene or scenes associated with the CIRT incident shall be processed by forensic laboratory personnel from an agency other than the Employer Agency, with exceptions consistent with the provisions of this agreement.

Any evidence collected from the crime scene shall be stored, managed and maintained by the Investigative Agency. This evidence shall be managed according to the policies and practices of the Investigative Agency.

Prior to final relinquishment of the scene, the CIRT investigator shall provide the Administrative Investigator of the Employer Agency an opportunity to assess the scene.

### Scene Procedures:

The scene(s) shall be secured immediately with a perimeter established a sufficient distance away to safeguard evidence. In some circumstances an inner and outer perimeter is appropriate. It is highly recommended that crime scene tape or other barriers be used to define the perimeters.

Access to the scene(s) shall be limited to only those officials who shall enter for an investigative purpose.

A written log shall be established as quickly as possible to identify all persons entering the scene(s), the time of their entry and exit, and the reason for entry.

Nothing inside the scene(s) shall be moved or removed without approval



of the CIRT Coordinator unless absolutely necessary for public or officer safety or for preservation of evidence. If removal without approval is necessary, the removal shall be witnessed and logged. The log shall state the identity of the person removing the described object, the reason for removal, a witness to the removal, and the time of removal. The item should be photographed prior to removal.

If the area is secure, loose weapons or instruments shall be left in place and undisturbed.

Body removal shall only occur after approval by the CIRT Coordinator.

### **VIII. Interviewing Agency Employees**

Research has shown that these types of incidents can be extremely stressful for agency employees and can result in inaccurate information being obtained during the interview of the involved Agency Employee if this interview is conducted too soon after the event has occurred.

The CIRT Coordinator shall work with all parties involved to determine when shall be the best time to interview the involved Agency Employee(s) with the understanding this may not occur for one or more days after the incident, depending on circumstances. It shall be the CIRT Coordinator's responsibility to monitor and ensure the CIRT is utilizing the industry's best practices as learned through training and research.

It is the intent of the CIRT to only conduct criminal investigations. Garrity advisements do not apply to criminal investigations, and thus are not a responsibility of CIRT.

Ideally, all interviews should be audio and video recorded but at a minimum shall be audio recorded.

The Administrative Investigator shall have the option of witnessing any Agency Employee interview and shall be provided with copies of all interview recordings. At the conclusion of the criminal interview, the Administrative Investigator may conduct their interview.

During a CIRT interview, if the Agency Employee under investigation invokes Miranda or otherwise declines an interview, the interview shall conclude. CIRT Investigators shall conduct all interviews according to established statutory and case law precedent.

The Employer Agency's Administrative Investigator may conduct an interview after the CIRT interview, however, no CIRT Investigator shall be a party to the interview, nor shall any CIRT Investigator witness the interview either in person or electronically. No statements obtained during the course of the interview after a Garrity advisement, nor any evidence derivatively obtained because of the interview under Garrity shall be provided to the criminal investigators.

The CIRT has no responsibility to contact legal representation or mental health providers. That is the responsibility of the Agency Employee or the Employer Agency.

The CIRT has no responsibility to assign or coordinate peer support for the Employer Agency. A peer support employee, if assigned by the Employer Agency, may be present to provide emotional support but shall not participate in or permit the discussion of the incident or allow for contamination of any evidence. The CIRT shall not interview or make any requests for information from the peer support employee unless there is an exigent circumstance, or an exception under C.R.S. § 13-90-107(m) exists. In this case, the CIRT Investigator shall notify the CIRT Coordinator as soon as possible, who will immediately notify the Employer Agency of the circumstances.

Any video evidence that may be procured during the course of the CIRT investigation, including from a body-worn camera by any law enforcement officer involved, shall not be viewed by any Agency Employee under investigation prior to conducting an interview with that person. While the Agency Employee's attorney may view any video evidence, any such viewing shall expressly be conditioned upon the agreement that he or she may not advise the employee of the content of that video, unless it is only to advise that the employee should not make any statement at that time.

#### **IX. The District Attorney's Office**

Attorneys from the District Attorney's Office have the following roles in CIRT investigations:

Assist and advise the CIRT on various criminal law issues that may arise, such as Miranda, voluntariness, search and seizure, probable cause to arrest, detentions and releases, elements of crimes, immunity, and legal defenses.

Upon completion of the criminal investigation, the District Attorney's Office shall review the case under the following circumstances:

- If required by statute
- If death or serious bodily injury is the result
- If probable cause exists that potential criminal activity has occurred

The District Attorney's Office shall notify the CIRT Coordinator, Case Agent, and chief executives of the Investigative and Employer Agencies on whether charges shall be filed via written document. The District Attorney's Office shall also comply with the requirements of C.R.S. § 20-1-114, and any written report for the purposes of that statute may serve as the written document that is sent to the Investigative and Employer Agencies.

The CIRT Coordinator is responsible to ensure that the District Attorney's Office is immediately notified of the activation of a CIRT.

X. **Report Writing/Review**

All CIRT Investigators shall write reports documenting their participation in the investigation. The Case Agent is responsible for reviewing all reports for content, accuracy and completeness. The completed CIRT Investigation shall be reviewed by the CIRT coordinator and the Investigating Agency chief executive prior to submission to the District Attorney for review, if a review is deemed necessary.

XI. **Public Information**

The Investigating Agency shall be responsible for all public information releases regarding the CIRT Investigation.

At a time deemed appropriate, the Employer Agency may release the name(s) of the law enforcement officers involved in the incident in the interest of transparency.

To maintain the integrity of the investigation, all public information releases shall be reviewed with the CIRT Coordinator, Case Agent, District Attorney's Office, and the chief executives of both the Employer and Investigative Agencies.

Employer Agencies may, in consultation with the CIRT Coordinator and the District Attorney's Office, release certain media, including 911 calls, radio traffic, and body worn camera footage, when deemed appropriate by the Employer Agency. The Employer Agency shall redact information that is sensitive to the investigation or prosecution and any information that infringes on the privacy interests of those individuals in the audio and video.

XII. **Access to Reports and Evidence**

The Administrative Investigator(s) of the Employer Agency shall have access to all reports, notes, and evidence collected during the CIRT investigation.

When the District Attorney's Office concludes that the physical evidence collected through the investigation is no longer needed for criminal prosecution, the Investigative Agency shall be notified of that decision so the preservation or disposition of the evidence can comply with the Investigative Agency's policy.

The case should be locked in the records management system to limit access to CIRT personnel only until the case receives a disposition from the District Attorney. Upon final disposition from the District Attorney's Office, the case shall be unlocked.

XIII. **Debriefing**

At the discretion of the CIRT Coordinator, or any Member Agency chief executive, a CIRT debrief shall be conducted to evaluate the CIRT Process.

#### **XIV. Open Records Requests**

CIRT investigations records and the records of the underlying incident are "criminal justice records" pursuant to the Colorado Criminal Justice Records Act ("CCJRA"), C.R.S. § 24-2-301 *et seq.* Records of the original incident that resulted in the CIRT investigation are maintained by the custodian of records for the Employer Agency, including the 911 call(s), radio traffic, body worn camera, and written reports created by the Employer Agency. Any records created or gathered by CIRT Investigators, including the Employer Agency's records for the underlying incident shall be maintained by the custodian of records for the Investigative Agency.

Requests for these records received by any Member Agencies shall be referred to the CIRT Coordinator for proper handling under the CCJRA. Member Agencies have the discretion to handle requests for records in the Member Agency's custody as necessary to comply with the law.


For requests of body worn camera made pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-31-902(2)(a), the Employer Agency shall work with the CIRT Coordinator and the DA's office to comply with the requirements of that statute.

#### **XV. Term**

This protocol shall remain in effect until replaced with a new written protocol signed by the chief executives of the Member Agencies. A Member Agency may withdraw from this protocol at any time with written notice to the Member Agencies, and with the understanding that the withdrawing agency must meet their statutory requirement for participation in a multi-agency investigation team on their own.

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THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM FOR THE 21ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT IS  
HEREBY AGREED TO BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023, BY THE FOLLOWING:

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  


Key: 6f3cc42b-6ed5-48d1-6e091b03e4745682  
Daniel P. Rubinstein, District Attorney  
21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District

09-20-2023

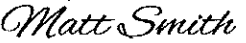
Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  


Key: 6335001-87948-4738-6031-4e0c97c5287c  
Todd Rowell, Sheriff  
Mesa County Sheriff's Office

09-25-2023


Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  


Key: e4d3e758-9423-46fba7a-726c048170994  
Matt Smith, Chief of Police  
Grand Junction Police Department

09-27-2023

Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  


Key: 8b22a7ca-8176-4193-8761-02d91957028  
David Krouse, Chief of Police  
Fruita Police Department

09-27-2023

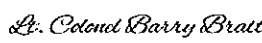
Date

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Key: 85c2b792-2a12-4859-829a-22d180257777  
Jesse Stanford, Chief of Police  
Palisade Police Department

10-17-2023

Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  


Key: 812b-8210-6275-4934-64847b3257c9442  
Barry Bratt, LTC  
Colorado State Patrol

10-28-2023

Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  


Key: 2a22227a-8c47-45d3-858c-3aa203477021  
Chris Schaefer, Director  
Colorado Bureau of Investigation

10-30-2023

Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  


Key: 21a5145-03e-4361-e420-6e32833f803c  
Moses "Andre" Stancil, Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Corrections

11-08-2023

Date