

CHAPTER 4.0

PATROL

4.10 MENTALLY ILL OR GRAVELY DISABLED INDIVIDUALS

4.10.1 Purpose

To establish the policies and procedures which govern how personnel of the Norwalk Department of Police Service handle incidents involving individuals with mental or behavioral health problems to ensure a coordinated response in providing services.

4.10.2 Policy

It is the policy of the Norwalk Department of Police Service to respond to incidents involving individuals with mental or behavioral health problems with compassion, professionalism and concern for the safety of all involved. The Norwalk Department of Police Service uses the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) as a resource when possible for identifying and providing services to individuals.

4.10.3 Definitions

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT): Partnership between the police, dispatchers, mental health professionals and the community that seeks to achieve the common goals of safety, understanding, and service to persons in crisis, the mentally ill and their families.

CIT Officer: A police officer trained and certified in first response crisis intervention. The CIT officer works in partnership with the CIT clinicians to respond to incidents of persons in crisis.

Crisis Incident: Any call in which an individual might benefit from the specialized training and knowledge of the CIT member. Crisis incidents include but are not limited to calls involving; persons known to have mental illness who are experiencing a crisis; persons displaying behavior indicative of mental illness; attempted or threatened suicide; calls involving gravely disabled individuals or calls where individuals may be experiencing emotional trauma.

Mentally Ill: A person who has a mental or emotional condition, which has substantial adverse effects on their ability to function and who requires care and treatment. Persons who are alcohol or drug dependant are specifically excluded from this category.

Gravely Disabled: A condition in which a person, as a result of mental or physical impairment, is in danger of serious physical harm resulting from an inability or unwillingness to provide for their basic human needs coupled with the fact that such person is mentally incapable of determining whether or not to accept the necessary treatment.

Incapacitated Person: A condition in which a person, as a result of alcohol or drug use, has impaired judgment rendering them incapable of making rational decisions regarding their need for medical treatment.

4.10.4 Guidelines for Recognition of Persons Suffering From Mental Illness

Others saying the person is not him/herself

Persons exhibiting behavior that is dangerous to themselves or others

Persons exhibiting withdrawn behavior, talking only to themselves

Persons experiencing sensations not based on reality such as visions, odors, tastes, voices

Persons with unrealistic ideas or grand thoughts

Persons that believe they are worthless

Persons exaggerating events, and/or

Persons experience loss of memory and/or time

4.10.5 Community Mental Health Resources

A CIT officer will be assigned to crisis incidents when available. Absent unusual circumstances, a CIT officer should not be called in if not on duty.

Personnel shall be aware of available resources. Additional resources include:

1. Franklin S. DuBois Center 203-358-8500

Any officer making a verbal referral to the DuBois Mobil Crisis Team will fax a copy of their report to the DuBois Center secure fax line at (203) 854-4815. The officer will request permission from any third party complainants to include their information in the fax. If the third party complainant does not give permission, the officer will redact the third party information from the report prior to faxing the report to the DuBois Center.

2. Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County 203-299-1315

3. Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse 800-586-9903

4. Norwalk Hospital 203-852-2160

5. INFO LINE 211

4.10.6 Identifying CIT Calls

The following are types of calls that may require CIT officer response:

- Mental Health Disorders
- Traumatic Incidents
- Sudden Deaths
- Attempted/Threatened Suicide
- Medical Assist/Well Being checks
- Breach of Peace/Disorderly conduct

- Trespassing/Refusing to leave the property

Dispatchers are the primary source for identifying CIT incidents, however responding officers and supervisors may also make this determination. Supervisors shall ensure CIT officers are dispatched to the appropriate incidents without undue delay when available. A list of certified CIT officers shall be kept in the Combined Dispatch Center.

4.10.7 Contact, Interview and Interrogation

Personnel who interact with subjects who may be mentally ill should consider safety issues since a person with mental illness may react differently. This includes persons who are victims, witnesses and suspects.

1. Evaluate the situation,
2. Do not abuse or threaten the person,
3. Avoid unnecessary excitement, and
4. Sworn personnel who find it necessary to interview or interrogate a person with a mental illness shall follow all laws and procedures that would apply to any other interview or interrogation.

4.10.8 Procedures

Personnel of the Norwalk Department of Police Service shall adhere to the policies set forth below when dealing with mentally ill or gravely disabled individuals, serving warrants issued by the Probate Court, or making an emergency commitment.

Reporting Procedures

Contacts with mentally ill or gravely disabled individuals resulting in their being taken into protective custody must be documented in an incident report.

The incident report shall include, but not be limited to, method of contact, method of transportation and place where transported, if applicable.

Copies of the probate court warrant or the Police Emergency Examination Request shall be attached to the incident report.

Training

It shall be the responsibility of the Training and Recruitment Division to provide and/or document entry-level training of agency personnel who may have contact with the public.

It shall be the responsibility of the Training and Recruitment Division to provide and document refresher training in interactions with persons suspected of having mental illness annually.

The commanding officer of the Training and Recruitment Division will be the coordinator of the CIT program and serve as the Departments liaison with the Department of Mental Health (DMH). The CIT Coordinator shall provide the DMH with the necessary reports.

CIT officers will be chosen at the sole discretion of the Chief of Police from those expressing an interest.

Officers successfully complete a 40 hour CIT certification program before being designated as a CIT officer. CIT officers shall attend in service training as needed to maintain their certification.

4.10.9 Police Emergency Examination Request

Any officer who comes in contact with a person who he/she has reasonable cause to believe is mentally ill and dangerous to themselves or others, or gravely disabled and in need of immediate care and treatment:

- A. Shall take such person into custody and have the person taken to a hospital for an emergency examination.
 - 1. The person may be restrained but only to the extent necessary to protect the person, officer and/or the public, using only that amount of force necessary to affect the restraint.
 - 2. The person shall normally be transported by ambulance but may be transported by the officer if circumstances warrant and with the supervisor's approval.
 - 3. Conduct a search of the individual and possessions for weapons and/or items that would constitute an obvious threat to the safety of the individual, the officer, emergency personnel or the public.

- B. Shall complete a written request for emergency examination using the designated form, detailing the circumstances under which the person was taken into custody:
 - 1. The request shall be left with the facility.
 - 2. A copy of the request shall be attached to the incident report.

- C. Sworn personnel shall be required to stand by at the hospital with the person in distress until all of the following have occurred:
 - 1. The assigned officer has provided an Emergency committal form to the ER staff,
 - 2. The officer has provided an ER staff member with a basic overview of the person's behavior (i.e., any known hazards such as threats and/or violent behavior),
 - 3. The person in distress is registered and has changed over into hospital clothing. (It is this time period where the greatest risk of violent behavior is likely to occur), and
 - 4. The officer(s) has notified the ER Primary Nurse (the patient's assigned nurse) or Charge Nurse (ER Supervisory Nurse overseeing the staff of ER nurses) they are leaving prior to the officer(s) clearing the ER.

4.10.10 Probate Court Warrants

Probate Court can issue warrants directing the police department named to apprehend the person (respondent) named and have that person taken to the hospital named for:

- An examination by a psychiatrist and a physician, or
- A hearing before the Judge of Probate
- The warrant shall remain active until the person (respondent) named is apprehended

4.10.11 Duties of the Officers Serving the Warrant

1. Ensure that the DOB of the person the warrant is issued for appears on the warrant
2. Apprehend the person
3. Advise the hospital named in the warrant that the person (respondent) shall be transported to their facility
4. If necessary to protect the person, the officer or the general public, the officer may restrain the person *using only that amount of force necessary to affect the restraint*
5. Determine the appropriate mode of transportation (ambulance or cruiser)
6. Ensure the person is taken to the hospital named
7. Upon arrival at the hospital, turn the person over to the custody of a duly-authorized representative of the hospital and have that representative sign the "received by" section at the bottom of the warrant form
8. Sworn personnel shall not be required to standby at the hospital. The Emergency Room staff may request a standby based upon the person's behavior (e.g. violent tendencies)
9. Sign the "delivering officer" section, as well as complete the date, time, and the delivering Officer's department section of the warrant
10. Ensure that the signed original copy of the warrant is returned to the appropriate Probate Court
11. Attach a copy of the warrant to the incident report

4.10.12 Seizure of Firearms from Person Posing Risk of Imminent Personal Injury to Self or Others

If an officer has probable cause to believe that:

- 1) such person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or others
- 2) such person possesses one or more firearms, and
- 3) such firearm(s) are within or upon any place, thing, or person

The officer shall apply for a search and seizure warrant, using form JD-CR-129, pursuant to CGS 29-38c.

