



Peer Defusing and Grief Counseling

Revision and Approval

Revision	Date	Nature of Changes	Approved By
0	08-30-2019	Original issue.	Richard Foley

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Background

This process establishes Structure Construction (SC) roles, responsibilities, and procedures for seeking out peer defusing and grief counseling when a death, serious injury, hostile workplace incident, or other traumatic or stressful incident occurs in the workplace.

Caltrans policies for Peer Defusing and Grief Counseling are in:

1. [Caltrans Safety and Health Manual, Chapter 19, Special Reporting of Serious Injury, Illness, or Fatality](#)
2. [Employee Assistance Program \(E.A.P.\)](#)

Prior to reviewing this Bridge Construction Memo (BCM), it is essential to review any policy documents referenced above. The information in the policy document(s) typically will not be repeated in the text of this BCM.

Process Inputs

1. Serious injury or death occurs in the workplace
2. Hostile workplace incident
3. Any other traumatic/stressful incident occurs in the workplace

Procedure

1. All work associated with this process is charged as [Overhead](#).
2. SC Staff:
 1. All SC staff may seek grief counseling or peer defusing after a death, serious injury, hostile workplace, or other traumatic or stressful event in the workplace by:
 - i. Contacting the supervisor.
 - ii. Go to [Employee Assistant Program \(E.A.P.\)](#) for information.
 - iii. Additional Resources: [Coping with Grief and Loss](#), [Resources for Handling Traumatic Events](#).
 2. SC Supervisors:
 - a. Inform SC manager that a death, serious injury, or other traumatic or stressful event has occurred.
 - b. Contact [Critical Incident Stress Management \(CISM\)](#) team member to discuss the need for/request a Peer Defusing session for affected staff.
 - c. Contact CalHR [District E.A.P. Coordinator](#) and request grief counseling for affected staff.
 - d. Contact the District Construction Safety Coordinator.
 - e. In case of Line of Duty Death:
 - i. Refer to the *Caltrans Safety and Health Manual*, [Section 19-2](#), *Action for Fatalities*.
 - ii. Health and Safety links has additional information on [Line of Duty Death](#).
 - f. Proactively look for decreased staff productivity or morale after:
 - i. Serious injury or death occurs in the workplace.
 - ii. Hostile workplace incident.
 - iii. Any other traumatic/stressful incident.
 - g. After detecting a need for peer defusing or grief counseling, the supervisor reviews the *Caltrans Safety and Health Manual*, Section 19-5.2, *Employee Assistance Program*, and when appropriate, may:
 - i. Recommend grief counseling or peer defusing:
 1. To arrange, contact the District Construction Safety Coordinator.
 2. Go to [E.A.P.](#) for information.

- ii. Remind employee of E.A.P. availability and refer staff to E.A.P. as necessary.
 - iii. Temporarily add staff to assist affected projects.
 - iv. Reassign affected employees as necessary.
 - v. Continue to monitor employee morale and productivity.
- h. Document actions taken.
- i. Ensure proper documentation of the employee's request for grief counseling or peer defusing while ensuring that employee confidentiality is maintained.
 - j. Verify/follow up that the employee's needs were met and continue to provide support through available functional supports and services such as CISM Program Team Member.
- k. For additional information, see:
- i. [BCM B-1.13](#), *SC Employee Accident and Injury Reporting*.
 - ii. [BCM C-2.09](#), *Investigating and Reporting Accidents in Construction Zones*.
 - iii. [Director's Policy DP-18](#), *Workplace Violence Prevention*.
- l. Additional resources: [What Do I Do First?](#), [CalHR Supervisors Handbook](#), [HQ Health and Safety Contact List](#)
4. SC Managers:
- a. Proactively look for decreased employee productivity or morale after:
 - i. Serious injury or death occurs in the workplace.
 - ii. Hostile workplace incident.
 - iii. Any other traumatic/stressful incident.
 - b. Verify and ensure that SC Supervisors have offered/recommended grief counseling or peer diffusing after a serious incident in the workplace to employees.
 - c. Verify that proper documentation is being kept by SC Supervisor.
 - d. Utilize [E.A.P.](#) as a management tool, when appropriate.
 - e. Request the assistance of the Deputy Division Chief of SC when necessary.

Process Outputs

- 1. Peer Defusing and/or grief counseling sought
- 2. Documentation

Attachments

None