

WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

II-6 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (E.A.P.)

EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005

CALEA Standards: 22.2.3, 22.2.6, 22.2.10

CFA Standards: N/A

I. POLICY: The West Palm Beach Police Department has established guidelines for employees seeking assistance through the City's Employee Assistance Program. The Police Department's personnel policies have the underlying concept of positive regard for the employee as an individual and as a worker. To uphold this concept of caring for our employees, the Department participates in the City's E.A.P. which provides assistance for employees work and non-work related problems. Emotional stability in the face of stressful situations is a prime requirement for effective law enforcement work. In order to maintain a productive and well-adjusted organization and to provide the City of West Palm Beach with the best possible service, the West Palm Beach Police Department is committed to assisting employees who may be experiencing personal or stress related problems.

II. DEFINITION:

A. Employee Assistance Program (E.A.P.) - Is a confidential guidance and referral service for City employees and their families, for both work and non-work related matters, which may be utilized as a consultation service for supervisors who have employees with work related performance problems.

III. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, E.A.P.:

A. The Police Department participates in the City's Employee Assistance Program. Program services are provided by an independent service under contract with the City.

B. It will be the responsibility of the Police Department's E.A.P. Coordinator to coordinate the Employee Assistance Program.

C. The Employee Assistance Program is designed to help employees and their immediate families with behavioral/medical problems which affect job performance and/or attendance. Immediate family members are defined as spouse and children who are dependent upon the employee for at least 50% of their support. Children who are full-time students under the age of 21 are also eligible.

D. The resources of the E.A.P. are available to any eligible employee who voluntarily requests help and to the employee's immediate family members.

E. Such assistance is limited to a total of six (6) visits per employee/family member per contract year. Payment for any treatment beyond the sixth visit per contract year will be the responsibility of the employee and/or the appropriate insurance carrier. Visits are not cumulative from one contract year to the next contract year.

F. All employees and family members are encouraged to voluntarily use the services of the Employee Assistance Program.

G. Any communication between the employee or the family member and E.A.P. will be held in the strictest of confidence.

IV. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY:

A. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance on their own before problems affect their work. Early resolution of personal problems is in the best interest of the individual and the Police Department.

B. It is the employee's choice to accept or decline the services offered by the Employee Assistance Program.

C. Participation in the Employee Assistance Program will not jeopardize an employee's job security or promotional opportunities.

D. It is the employee's responsibility to assess and maintain optimum physical and mental health.

V. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY:

A. It is not the intent of the Employee Assistance Program to have supervisory management actively looking for employees with problems.

B. It will be the responsibility of supervisors at all levels to assess job performance and, when appropriate, encourage employees to seek assistance through the E.A.P. if the assistance is beyond the supervisor's normal counseling duty.

C. Supervisors will refrain from making any diagnosis of an employee's problem. Referrals for assistance will be made only at the employee's request or on the basis of job performance.

D. The E.A.P. staff and supervisors will not get involved when a family member notifies the Department or a supervisor to complain about an employee's behavior at home.

E. The Department will not intrude into an employee's private life by utilizing family information to refer an employee to the E.A.P.

F. The Employee Assistance Program will not be used for a "Fitness for Duty Evaluation" or for any type of disciplinary action for any employee.

VI. PROCEDURE FOR ASSISTANCE:

A. Whenever circumstances dictate, any employee or family member can self-initiate the services of the Employee Assistance Program.

B. Through assessment of job performance, an employee's supervisor may consider employee referral to the Employee Assistance Program.

1. Such referral to the E.A.P. by a supervisor should be based on the supervisor's regular and routine observation, documentation, confrontation, and the initial referral and monitoring of the employee's job performance.

2. Observation is the first step in working with an employee who seems to be experiencing a personal problem or crisis by recognizing that such problems/crises exist. Watch carefully for unusual actions or for a change in work performance. If these actions continue or performance declines there may be cause for concern. The key is consistency. Anyone can have an off day but if the symptoms are consistent, it may signal something is wrong. Some of these symptoms may include:

- a. Inability to relax;
- b. Missing deadlines;
- c. Having accidents;
- d. Making errors;
- e. Withdrawing from or avoiding co-workers;
- f. Sluggishness or Inability to complete tasks;
- g. Being late frequently or absent from work; and/or
- h. Having conflicts with others.

3. Documentation is essential to substantiate the employee's display of repeated symptoms or unusual behaviors over a period of time. Documenting should be accomplished for the following reasons:

- a. To demonstrate to the employee exactly when and where his or her performance has declined.
- b. To have this data available in case of an employee grievance.

c. To enable those involved in diagnosis and treatment to more effectively assess the problem.

VII. E.A.P. RECORDS:

A. To preserve the employee's right to privacy, records and discussions regarding the nature of personal problems will be handled in a highly confidential manner.

B. All records regarding the E.A.P. will be maintained by the contracted provider in strict confidence and separate from personnel records.

C. The contents of these records will only be released with the employee's written permission.

VIII. REFERENCE:

- SOP # IV-5 Investigation of Critical Incidents.
- City of West Palm Beach Administrative Manual, Policy 4-3 Employee Assistance Program.

Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police

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