**Aftermath of a Critical Incident**

This checklist is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all steps or a rigid time line, but it may serve as a guide to protect the officer after the officer is involved in a shooting, a Use of Force critical incident or in custody death.

1. Secure the scene
2. Call for medical unit and render aid
3. Call for supervisor/response team
4. Broadcast lookout/Public Safety statement
5. Secure your weapon, do not reload if scene is secure, do not remove shell casings
6. Identify witnesses
7. Take photos with your cell phone
8. Avoid “hot debriefs”; do not give a recorded or written statement at the scene. Do not do a walk-thru with any investigator. Wait 48-72 hours before any interview except for a health and safety statement
9. Do not discuss with any officer the details of the incident
10. Seek medical attention as soon as you are taken from the scene
11. Contact your family but do not discuss the facts – assure of your safety
12. Eat and drink something (no alcohol)
13. Submit to a blood and urine test after consulting with your attorney if possible
14. Stay with a gate keeper for 48-72 hours. Get at least 2 or 3 sleep cycles before submitting to any interview
15. Consent a lawyer before any interview, remember Garrity does not protect you from civil liability and may not protect you from criminal liability
16. Get psychological support to deal with potential PTSD
17. Know your Weingarten Rights if you are represented by a union.

After a critical incident you are extremely likely to feel overwhelmed, you may have a severe sense of vulnerability, tension, difficulty sleeping. You have suffered trauma and your memory of the facts of the Critical Incident may very likely be distorted and incorrect. Your department should have a Trauma Intervention Team or Program to give you support you need. If your department does not have this expertise get an outside psychologist to help you through the trauma and stress.

Once you have had the opportunity to rest, consult with an attorney and/or union representative you then need to prepare for the interview/investigation that your department, POST, the prosecutor and/or other State or Federal agencies may request. Some things you should do in preparation for this interview are as follows:

1. Have an attorney present during the interview or debrief. Remember you police in a world where politicians, the press, the public, and maybe your department or a prosecutor second guess, questions and litigate the split-second decisions you made during the Critical Incident.

**B**. Before the debrief for interview do your homework, listen to all radio transmissions, review photos, reports, videos and other materials that might refresh your memory. Your lawyer may also want you to go to scene.

During the interview remember anything you say can be used against you in any civil or potential criminal action even if you have been given Garrity warnings.

It is not unusual for you to have cognitive dissonance for weeks or months after a Critical Incident and you may find your memory of the e

vent does not mesh with the facts at the scene.

During the interview or debrief answer the questions honestly. Do not be afraid to say, “I do not know, or I do not remember”.

Remember you are still suffering from the trauma of the event. Tell your story to your lawyer but do not feel compelled to tell your story during am interview, that is your lawyer’s job. Your job is to answer only the questions that are asked, not to volunteer information you think the person conducting the interview should ask.