

New Canaan Police Department

Subject: **MENTALLY ILL PERSONS**

General Order Number: 06-01-113

File: OPS

LAW ENFORCEMENT

I PURPOSE/POLICY

It is the policy of the New Canaan Police Department to often protect an emotionally or mentally unstable person from harming themselves, others, or property. Police work brings officers into contact with persons who are emotionally or mentally unstable. This instability may be due to any number of factors, including but not limited to, alcohol/drug dependency, emotional trauma, or another underlying mental illness (not limited to but including a mood disorder, psychotic disorder, anxiety disorder or cognitive disorder). Regardless of the reason, the concern of the officer coming into such contact is for the safety and welfare of that person, the community, and the officer. When an officer has probable cause to believe that an emotionally or mentally unstable person presents an immediate threat of harm to them, another person, or property, that person shall be taken into protective custody and transported to a facility where trained professionals can evaluate the individual for mental stability as well as safety, and to ensure the best possible care.

II RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all Department personnel to adhere to the procedures set forth in this general order. It is the additional responsibility of the supervisory staff to ensure its compliance.

III DEFINITIONS

A. Officers should be aware of the following terms as defined in C.G.S 17a-495:

1. Mentally Ill Person: Any person who has a mental or emotional condition which has substantial adverse effects on his or her ability to function and who requires care and treatment.
2. Gravely Disabled: A person, as a result of mental or emotional impairment, that is in danger of serious harm as a result of an inability or failure to provide for his or her own basic human needs such as essential food, clothing, shelter or safety. Hospital treatment is necessary and available and such person is mentally incapable of determining whether or not to accept such treatment because his judgment is impaired by his psychiatric disabilities (C.G.S. 17a-495.)

3. Crisis Incident: These calls would include, but are not limited to: Calls involving persons known to have a mental illness experiencing crisis; reports of behavior indicative of mental illness (i.e. psychosis, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, schizophrenia, dementia, substance use/intoxication) especially when a person may be dangerous to self, others and/or property; calls of threatened or attempted suicide; calls in which individuals may be experiencing emotional trauma, or can be otherwise deemed as gravely disabled.
4. COAST: Stands for Community Outreach and Support Team
5. COAST Officer: (Community Outreach and Support Team Officer): A police officer who has successfully completed advanced mental health training and has been assigned to the Community Outreach and Support Team.
6. Dangerous to Himself/Herself or Others: Mentally ill persons, as defined above, are considered dangerous to themselves or others when a risk exists that they will inflict physical harm to themselves or on another (C.G.S. 17a-495.)
7. 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.

IV PROCEDURES (Dispatchers)

- A. When a request for police services is received involving a subject with mental illness, the dispatcher shall evaluate the request as to its seriousness and dispatch a patrol unit to the scene using the appropriate response code (refer to General Order 89-1-54, Patrol). In the event that the subject is reported to be suicidal or otherwise present a danger to his/herself or others, the dispatcher shall make every attempt to determine if there are any weapons at the scene, and notify responding officer of such information. Two (2) officers should be assigned to these types of calls for service.
- B. Outside Agency Response: If the dispatcher is aware that a subject does indeed present a risk to his/herself or others and other agencies (EMS, Fire, etc.) are responding, then the dispatcher shall inform those agencies of the threat through the appropriate channels (i.e. CMED).

V PROCEDURES (Responding Officers)

1. If a COAST officer is on-duty and available, the COAST officer may request through his or her supervisor to be assigned to the call and will only respond after authorization is received. If the call is determined to be a crisis incident, as defined above, the COAST officer on-scene should be assigned as the primary officer or used as a resource on scene to assist the primary officer.
2. New Canaan Police Officers shall abide by C.G.S.17a-503 which states: Any police officer who has reasonable cause to believe that a person has psychiatric disabilities and is dangerous to himself or herself or others or gravely disabled, and in need of immediate care and treatment, may take such person into custody and take or cause such person to be taken to a general hospital for emergency examination under this section. The officer shall execute a written request for emergency examination (Police Emergency Examination Request: MHCC-1) detailing the circumstances under which the person was taken into custody and such request shall be left with the facility. A copy will be filed with the incident report.

Guidelines for Recognition of Persons Suffering From Mental Illness

- A. Others saying the person is not behaving as him/herself
 - B. Persons exhibiting behavior that is dangerous to themselves or others
 - C. Persons exhibiting withdrawn behavior, talking only to themselves
 - D. Persons experiencing sensations not based on reality such as visions, odors, tastes, voices
 - E. Persons with unrealistic ideas or grand thoughts
 - F. Persons expressing a wish to die
 - G. Persons expressing emotions such as hopelessness, worthlessness or feeling trapped
 - H. Persons exaggerating events, and/or Persons experience loss of memory and/or time
3. In the event an emergency examination request is deemed appropriate pursuant to CGS 17a-503, an ambulance will be requested for transport. If necessary, an officer may transport the person to the hospital in a patrol car (this should be done only in exceptional circumstances and only to a hospital in the area.) When transporting such a subject, the officer shall follow all safety precautions as defined in G.O. 89-20-73 Prisoner Transportation.
 4. The primary concern of New Canaan Police officers responding to incidents involving mentally ill persons shall be the safety of everyone involved, including their own.
 5. Officers can also contact Dubois Mobil Crisis Team (Stamford) if they encounter a repeat patient that is not getting the support they need after repeated transports, for cases in which a patient is presenting only "borderline symptoms" and an emergency committal will not be immediately utilized, or upon request. For those cases where the patient is presenting "borderline symptoms" the officer can make a reasonable attempt to persuade the subject to volunteer to be treated by health care professionals.
 6. When a subject does not present a danger to his/herself or others, is not gravely disabled, and has not committed a crime, then the officer shall not take custody of that subject without the written order of a physician, a court order, or the voluntary request of that subject to receive treatment.
 7. When deemed appropriate by the Shift Commander or his/her designee, incident reports regarding interactions with subjects with mental illness or suspected mental illness may be forwarded to the Town of New Canaan Human Services Department.
 8. Every officer/supervisor shall also be trained to be aware of, and be able to utilize all outside agencies and services to assist and treat subjects with mental illness. Some of those resources are as follows:
 - A. Child Guidance Center - available via 211
The Emergency Mobile Crisis Services provide immediate on-site mental health assessment and crisis stabilization services 24-hours a day, 7 days a week for children and adolescents.
 - B. Family Centers- offers education, counseling, crisis intervention and human services to children, adults. They have trauma response specialists who will provide on-site counseling and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) services to assist with traumatic or crisis situations, (203) 324-3167 during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or (877) 349-4689 for any after-hour emergencies.

- C. Kids in Crisis - (203) 661-1911
They provide round-the-clock crisis counseling and temporary shelter for infants, children and teens. Staff offers support and solutions to families and children struggling with a number of issues.
- D. Department of Children and Families - (860) 550-6550
- E. Franklin S. Dubois Center - (203) 358-8500 Secure Fax (Referrals) (203) 854-4815
The Dubois Center provides access to a psychiatrist and offers a number of programs and services. This includes inpatient hospitalization, outpatient clinical services, day treatment, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation, outreach services for persons with serious mental illness who are homeless, and comprehensive, community-based mental health treatment and support services.
- F. Town of New Canaan Youth and Family Services Coordinator- (203) 594-3081
- G. Connecticut Addiction Services - (800) 563-4086
- H. Open Door Shelter (Norwalk)- (203) 866-1057
- I. Alcoholics Anonymous- (203) 855-0075
- J. Narcotics Anonymous - (800) 627-3543
- K. Silver Hill Hospital Admissions- (203) 801-2220

VI PROCEDURES (Supervisor Responsibilities)

Community Outreach and Support Team (COAST) officers work within the current chain of command. Supervisors are responsible for utilizing COAST officers for their special training and supporting their work with the appropriate resources.

VII PROCEDURES (Community Outreach and Support Team officer Responsibilities)

The COAST officer will be responsible to ensure that they follow up to incidents involving mental illness that occur on their shifts. The COAST officer will be a shift resource to ensure that these types of calls are handled in the most efficient and effective manner.

VIII TRAINING and COMMUNITY OUTREACH and SUPPORT TEAM OFFICER SELECTION

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Training Office to provide and document entry-level training for all agency personnel.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of the Training Office to provide documented annual refresher training for all agency personnel.
- C. Community Outreach and Support Team Officers should receive training yearly, when it is available.

- D.** The Chief of Police shall select officers from a pool of volunteers. The recommended qualifications are as follows:
- a. Applicants must have completed probation.
 - b. Demonstrated Advanced People Skills: Patience, Empathy, Compassion, and Adaptability.

X **DISTRIBUTION**

This general order will be reproduced in electronic and traditional media. All sworn personnel shall have access to Department general orders through a read-only file on their individual domain of the Department's computer network. Printed copies will also be placed in locations throughout headquarters so that they are easily accessible to all personnel.

X **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Order is approved by the Police Commission and effective as of May 16, 2006.
Revised February 2020

Per Order

Leon M. Krolikowski
Chief of Police