



**BROWER**  
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In light of the most recent officer involved shooting, questions have arisen regarding the psychological services that officers receive following such an event. Our office maintains the utmost level of confidentiality regarding our officer and family care and we will not address or release specific information related to any of our officers. While these events result in broad impacts for nearly all involved, we are most highly concerned with the officer's wellbeing and that of their family, which in turn, has a positive impact on the community they serve.

A significant amount of training and preparation go into preparing an officer for these events. Our office provides training at the academy level in stress, trauma and peak performance under high stress. We also provide training for command officers regarding the identification of red flags and warning signs to look for in their officers, ensuring that they continue to stay mentally healthy and that any deviation is addressed early on.

Under Chief Metz's direction, the Aurora Police Department has expanded the resources available for officers, their families, dispatchers/call takers, civilians, and retirees. He has developed an incredibly responsive wellness unit, an exemplary peer support program, chaplain's unit, and has made officer wellbeing an agency priority.

Directly following an officer involved shooting, psychological services, the wellness unit and peer support are called to respond. Involved personnel are initially provided physical and psychological first aid, focused on calming physical and emotional stress and restoring and/or reinforcing an officers' sense of safety and wellbeing.

In accordance with the International Association Chiefs of Police Guidelines on Officer Involved Shootings, for those directly involved in a death or serious injury to another person, a minimum of three days leave, administrative or regular days off, is recommended. This should be seen as an administrative leave, not a suspension or any form of discipline. There is some flexibility in that some officers, minimally impacted, may be returned sooner than others who may require more time off.

Officers are mandated, for one session with our office, within one to two weeks following the event. Should the officer feel that they need additional sessions, they are permitted and encouraged to go back for unlimited follow-up sessions. After completion of their individual post-incident intervention, they also undergo one group debrief with all involved parties. Aurora's wellness unit and peer support further track the involved parties and offer ongoing support. They also provide a written Critical Incident Packet, to the involved officers, explaining physical and psychological reactions to critical events. Prior to the officer's return to duty, they are encouraged to both revisit the scene and fire their weapon.

In accordance with the International Association Chiefs of Police Guidelines on Officer Involved Shootings, we provide an informal assessment, referenced as a Return to Duty, which serves the function of verifying the officer's attendance in the mandatory post-incident intervention, but also addresses whether or not the officer may benefit from additional days off of work or being placed in a light duty assignment (when

available). These recommendations are made with the officer's knowledge and are requested of the agency. The agency has the final determination regarding officer placement and/or allowance of additional days. Generally, officers are returned to duty and are encouraged to reach out if they experience any ongoing difficulties. As with best practices, our office also follows-up with the officer at one and three months post-incident to address any delayed reactions. Our office can mandate additional sessions if necessary and can mandate further treatment prior to an officer returning to duty.

The International Association Chiefs of Police Guidelines on Officer Involved Shootings states:

It should be made clear to all involved personnel, supervisors, and the community at large that officers' fitness-for-duty should not be brought into question simply by virtue of their involvement in a shooting or other critical incident. Post-shooting and other critical incident psychological interventions are separate and distinct from any fitness-for-duty assessments or administrative or investigative procedures that may follow. This does not preclude an agency from requesting a formal fitness-for-duty evaluation based upon objective concerns about an officer's ability to perform his or her duties due to a suspected medical or psychological condition. However, the mere fact of being involved in a shooting does not necessitate such an evaluation prior to return to duty. (Please see *IACP PPSS Psychological Fitness-for-Duty Evaluation Guidelines* for information concerning the criteria and procedures for these evaluations.)

There have been questions made regarding allowing officer's additional recovery time prior to providing their full statement. Research is somewhat conflicted and there are proponents and opponents on both sides of this argument. The IACP recommends that, "...whenever feasible, officers should have some recovery time before providing a full formal statement," ranging from a few hours to several days. The Force Science Institute has been noted to recommend nearly 48 hours of recovery prior to giving a statement.

Lastly, in order to provide some context, regarding the complex issue of officers involved in multiple shooting events, it should be understood that these are not "rare" events. While less common than single shootings, there are multiple instances, across Colorado and the Country where one officer is involved in multiple shootings. This information is provided only to create some level of context, that these events do occur. An assumption should not be made, without proper evidence of such, that an officer involved in a shooting is somehow more prone to engaging in lethal force again in the future.

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