



**1-36 OFFICER WELLNESS PROGRAM**

**Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Special Order(s):**

A. Related SOP(s)

- 1-10 Peer Support Program
- 1-20 Behavioral Sciences Section (Formerly 1-11)
- 1-25 Chaplain Unit
- 2-4 Use of Respirators
- 3-31 Physical Fitness Testing and Training
- 3-33 Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS)

B. Form(s)

- Supervisor Mandated Referral

C. Other Resource(s)

29 C.F.R. § 1910.95 Occupational Noise Exposure  
29 C.F.R. § 1910.134 Respiratory Protection  
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996  
Riebe, D., Ehrman, J. K., Liguori, G., & Magal, M. (2018) Benefits and risks associated with physical activity. In ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription (pp. 1-21). Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer.  
Spence, D. L., Fox, M., Moore, G. C., Estill, S., & Comrie, N. (2019). Report to Congress: Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act. Retrieved from <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p370-pub.pdf>

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

- None

**1-36-1 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework for the Officer Wellness Program (Program), which is a centralized and comprehensive program to support Albuquerque Police Department (Department) personnel's mental and physical health, stress management and peer support. This policy identifies and coordinates these resources for Department personnel and their families. The Program provides resources to address the demands of policing and law enforcement duties, which, if left unresolved, may lead to increased stress and unhealthy habits that could impact Department personnel detrimentally. The Program provides support to manage the higher levels of physical risk and mental stress inherent to law enforcement.

**1-36-2 Policy**



It is the policy of the Department successfully to implement its mission and goals by promoting the physical and mental well-being of all Department personnel. The Program encourages personnel to participate in regular exercise programs; to maintain a healthy lifestyle; and to provide a standard response to assist Department personnel involved in a critical incident.

### 1-36-3 Definitions

#### A. Critical Incident

1. An event that involves circumstances that go beyond the usual range of experiences that occur during every day policing and within mainstream society. Typically, a critical incident involves loss of life, significant injuries, or significant damage to property or requires heightened use of, or coordinating public resources. The three types of critical incidents are as follows:
  - a. Level 1 Critical Incident
    - i. An incident that includes, but is not limited to, officer-involved shooting (OIS); line of duty death; sworn personnel attempted and completed suicides to include assistance for responding sworn personnel, members of the sworn personnel's unit, and other close Department colleagues; Child fatality or injury with great bodily harm; and unsuccessful cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on a child.
  - b. Level 2 Critical Incident
    - i. An incident that includes, but are not limited to a completed suicide in response to a call for service; homicide; injury to sworn personnel; and any legitimate suspicion or reports to a supervisor of potential substance abuse problems.
  - c. Level 3 Critical Incident
    - i. An incident where supervisors and peers can request assistance from BSS or Peer Support Program personnel regarding the following, but not limited to Mental health issues; and/or work performance concerns about psychological wellness or substance abuse.

#### B. Critical Incident Check-up

A mandatory meeting with the Behavioral Sciences Section (BSS) licensed behavioral health clinician (clinician) that occurs when Department personnel are involved in a critical incident as defined in SOP Behavioral Sciences Section.

#### C. Mandated Workout Time

On-duty exercise time allocated for sworn personnel who serve in a unit with a physical fitness requirement; or on-duty exercise time allocated for sworn personnel when a Bureau Chief has determined such a program benefits a particular division, section, or team.



D. Mental Wellness Check-up

A mandatory meeting with clinician. For some bureaus or divisions, these meetings may be required biannually due to the potential for high stress or mentally challenging encounters or investigations that these specialized units conduct. A mental wellness check-up may help Department personnel address common stress factors encountered during policing and law enforcement activities. A mental wellness check-up is not a Fitness for Duty Examination.

E. Physical Fitness

As defined by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), “physical fitness” is the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and meet unforeseen emergencies (Riebe, D., Ehrman, J. K., Liguori, G., & Magal, M., 2018).

F. Physical Fitness Check-up

A program that combines the results of the annual physical fitness test, a regular exercise program that is consistent with the ACSM’s definition and recommendations (Reibe, Ehrman, Liguori, & Magal, 2018), and an annual physical wellness check-up to assist and incentivize Department personnel in maintaining a minimum level of physical health throughout their career.

G. Physical Wellness Check-up

An annual check-up performed by the City of Albuquerque Employee Health Center that includes blood testing to detect markers for physical health and stress indicators, an OSHA-approved hearing test, and respirator physical. A physical wellness check-up helps detect indicators of medical issues common to law enforcement duties. It is not a replacement for the recommended annual medical examination conducted by ~~the~~ personnel’s primary care physician.

H. Regular Exercise Program

Any exercise routine that addresses aerobic or anaerobic conditioning. Qualifying exercise programs should be safe, well designed and consistent with the recommendations of the ACSM. The ACSM defines exercise as a type of physical activity consisting of planned, structured, and repetitive bodily movement done to improve and/or maintain one or more components of physical fitness (Reibe, Ehrman, Liguori, & Magal, 2018).

I. Time-Off Bank (TOBANK)

Incentive hours for the regular exercise program are stored in the employee’s time-off bank (TOBANK). TOBANK time is available for all Department personnel. Exercise incentive hours are stored for personnel use and will expire after one (1) year if they



are not used. TOBANK hours are not paid out when an employee leaves City employment.

#### 1-36-4 General Requirements

A. Research has shown that police officer occupational stress is directly related to higher rates of heart disease, divorce, sick days taken, alcohol abuse, and major psychological illnesses such as acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety disorders. (US House of Representatives Report 115-428, 2017). To address these mental and physical health issues, the department has implemented a three-prong approach to encourage officer wellness, consisting of

1. Regular Exercise Program: The department offers incentives to encourage officers to maintain their physical health through a regular routine of exercise.
2. Mental Wellness: A regular meeting with a licensed therapist to address mental stress.
3. Physical Fitness Checkup. An annual physical fitness examine that provides employees with information concerning their physical health through OSHA mandated tests and blood tests for stress indicators.

B. The Officer Wellness Program consists of three components to improve the overall health and well-being of Department personnel and their families:

##### 1. Physical Wellness Component

- a. Annual Physical Wellness Check-up: The check-up includes testing that is completed through the City's Employee Health Center and consists of:
  - i. Blood testing to check for markers of general physical health that may indicate adverse reactions to high stress levels or indicators for heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other common health risks for first responders;
  - ii. Hearing tests, consistent with OSHA regulations (29 C.F.R. § 1910.95); and
  - iii. Respirator medical evaluation, consistent with OSHA regulations (29 C.F.R. § 1910.134).
  - iv. The annual physical wellness check-up is mandatory for all sworn employees of the department.
- b. Physical Fitness Check-up: This check-up consists of the annual physical fitness test, consistent with SOP Physical Fitness Testing and Training.
  - i. The Physical Fitness Check-up is mandatory for all sworn employees of the department.
- c. Regular Exercise Program: Employees are encouraged to participate in a voluntary regular exercise program to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

##### 2. Mental Wellness Component



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- a. The Mental Wellness Component of the Program consists of a coordinated effort between the BSS, Peer Support Program personnel, and the Chaplain Unit in order to provide assistance, emotional support, and counseling during critical incidents, high stress situations for Department personnel and their families.
- b. This component consists of:
  - i. Attendance at an annual mental wellness check-up with a clinician;
  - ii. Sworn personnel are required to attend the appointment but are not required to respond to any questions unless they choose to engage with the clinician.
  - iii. Routine check-ups with a licensed clinician or Peer Support Program personnel after involvement in a critical incident, when recommended or required;
  - iv. Access to services for Department personnel and their families to promote a healthy work and family environment throughout the Department personnel's career; and,
  - v. A Chaplain Unit liaison assigned to each cadet class.
3. Supervisors shall allow Department personnel time off and designate this time as "Paid Leave Other" (PLO) in the Department's timekeeping system, consistent with their respective union contracts to complete a physical wellness check-up and mental wellness check-up.
  - a. Department personnel not covered by a union contract shall be allowed a half day off to complete these examinations.
4. Continuing Education Component:
  - a. Every two years, as part of the Department's biennium training, sworn personnel shall receive updates on the Officer Wellness Program to include:
    - i. Services available to Department personnel and their families;
    - ii. How to access available services;
    - iii. Requirements for annual physical and mental wellness exams; and
    - iv. Any changes to the Officer Wellness Program.

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C. Confidentiality

1. Communication between Department personnel and Officer Wellness Program personnel during any program component is considered confidential with the exception of the following issues, which should be reported to the Chief of Police and the Department's Human Resources Manager:
  - a. Danger to oneself;
  - b. Danger to others;
  - c. Suspected child abuse;
  - d. Domestic violence;
  - e. Elder abuse;
  - f. When an employee requests their own information be divulged; and/or



- g. Matters that would jeopardize the safety of the public or other sworn personnel.
2. All medical information shall be deemed confidential, consistent with federal, state, and local confidentiality laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and shall not be shared with anyone other than Department personnel who participate in the Officer Wellness Program, with the exception of the following issues, which should be reported to the Chief of Police and the Department's Human Resources Manager:
- a. A medical determination that Department personnel be placed on a restricted duty, light duty, or non-duty status for treatment of a medical condition.
- b. A medical diagnosis shall not be shared with the chain of command without the Department personnel's written consent.
- i. The Employee Health Center provides the results of the physical wellness check-up to the Medical Director of the BSS for review.
- ii. The Medical Director of BSS shall contact Department personnel if any blood or hearing test results indicate a recommendation for a follow-up examination.
3. Department personnel's medical and mental wellness information is confidential and shall be protected, consistent with federal, state, and local confidentiality laws, including HIPAA, and consistent with the requirements of SOP Behavioral Sciences Section.
- ~~4.~~ Misuse of any information obtained through the Officer Wellness Program, including unauthorized disclosure of this information, shall be subject to discipline, up to and including demotion or termination from employment.

**1-36-5 Physical Wellness**

**A. Regular Exercise Program**

1. The Department's Bureau Chiefs have the authority to mandate workout time as part of the personnel's shift for a designated unit under their supervision.
2. Qualifying exercise programs should be safe and consistent with the recommendations of the ACSM, including:
- a. A program that consists of aerobic or anaerobic conditioning a minimum of three (3) times a week for an average of 120 minutes per week.
3. A regular exercise program is voluntary for all personnel, unless a Deputy Chief has mandated the workout as part of a units daily work schedule. Department personnel shall not be penalized for not participating in a voluntary regular exercise program.

**1-36-6 Mental Wellness**



A. Mental Wellness Check-up

1. Biannual Mental Wellness Check-up

a. Due to the high stress nature of the crimes investigated, sworn personnel assigned to the following units shall complete a mental wellness check-up biannually:

- i. Child Exploitation Detail: All sworn personnel at the rank of lieutenant or below.
- ii. Crimes Against Children Unit: All sworn personnel at the rank of lieutenant or below.

2. Annual Mental Wellness Check-up

a. All sworn personnel, not specifically identified above, shall complete a mental wellness check-up annually.

B. Critical Incidents

1. Critical incidents can have lasting and often undetected effects on law enforcement personnel (Spence, D. L., Fox, M., Moore, G. C., Estill, S., & Comrie, N., 2019). In order to address the stress associated with the law enforcement, the Department has designated certain events as critical incidents that require an outreach from either BSS or Peer Support units.

2. BSS and Peer Support Program personnel shall coordinate their response to critical incidents in order to provide support for the involved sworn personnel. BSS and Peer Support shall proactively respond to critical incidents, as follows:

a. Response to Level 1 Critical Incident:

- i. Mandated thirty (30) minute appointment with a BSS clinician.
- ii. Additional support, consistent with SOP Behavioral Sciences Section.
- iii. Two (2) follow-up contacts (in-person, phone call, and or email), consistent with SOP Peer Support Program.

b. Response to Level 2 Critical Incident:

- i. Mandated thirty (30) minute appointment with a BSS clinician, consistent with SOP Behavioral Sciences Section.
- ii. The Watch Commander/Section Head may waive this requirement.
- iii. If waived, the Watch Commander shall provide justification for doing so to the division head.
- iv. Two (2) follow-up contacts (in-person, phone call, and or email), consistent with SOP Peer Support Program.

c. Response to Level 3 Critical Incident:

- i. Peer Support Program personnel shall offer information about professional mental health support and available resources.
- ii. Supervisors can mandate referrals to a BSS clinician if there are objectively observed difficulties at work related to mental health issues.



1-36-7 Officer Wellness Program Incentives

A. The Officer Wellness Committee awards incentives in February and August, for the previous two quarters of each calendar year, as follows:

1. Department personnel who have fully participated in the Officer Wellness Program shall receive ten (10) hours of TOBANK time for each quarter, provided they have completed an average of three (3) exercise sessions per week for a minimum of 120 minutes per week.
2. Department personnel who have a mandated workout time as part of their normal duty hours shall not be eligible to receive additional incentives under this SOP.

1-36-8 Department Personnel Responsibilities for Incentives

A. Regular Exercise Program Requirements: Department personnel are responsible for verifying they have completed the required elements of the Officer Wellness Program to receive the incentives outlined in this policy.

1. Department personnel shall upload documentation to verify completion of the Officer Wellness Program via the approved Officer Wellness Program portal.
2. Exercise routines must be documented by either:
  - a. Exercising tracking programs, such as a smart watch, which can be uploaded via a link in the Officer Wellness Program portal, or
  - b. A manual exercise log entry using the Presbyterian Healthcare Services' Wellness at Work portal, which can be accessed through the Officer Wellness Program web page portal.
    - i. For exercise routines that do not allow Department personnel to wear a smartwatch during the exercise (e.g., boxing or martial arts training), Department personnel shall include the following in the comment section of the log:
      1. Class/school name;
      2. Instructor's name; and
      3. A contact phone number or e-mail address for the gym/fitness center.

B. Mental Wellness Program Requirements

1. All sworn personnel are required to schedule their mental wellness check-up as follows:
  - a. Biannual mental wellness check-ups: every six months, based on their birth month.



b. Annual mental wellness check-ups: each calendar year, during their birth month.

2. Sworn personnel shall schedule the mental wellness check-up by contacting BSS.

a. Sworn personnel are required to attend the appointment and sign-in on the BSS log sheet.

b. Sworn personnel are not required to talk to the BSS clinician unless they choose to.

**2** C. Physical Fitness Check-up Requirements

1. All sworn personnel shall schedule their physical fitness check-up through the Employee Health Center during the month of their birth.

1-36-9 Officer Wellness Program Committee

A. The Officer Wellness Program Committee consists of several members.

1. The following personnel shall be permanent members of the Program committee:

a. Executive Staff: Deputy Chief of Police, Professional Standards and Accountability Bureau;

b. Medical Director, Behavioral Science Section, or designated representative;

c. Department's Physical Wellness Coordinator;

d. Peer Support Program Coordinator;

e. Chaplain Unit Coordinator;

f. Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) Section Lieutenant or their designee; and

g. Representative from the Albuquerque Police Officers' Association.

2. On an annual basis, the Deputy Chief from each of the Department's bureaus shall appoint a representative to serve as an advisor to the Committee, as follows:

a. Investigative Bureau representative;

b. Special Operations Bureau representative;

c. Field Services Bureau representative; and

d. Management Services and Support Bureau representative.

3. A City of Albuquerque Better Health representative may attend as an advisor to the Committee.

B. The Officer Wellness Program Committee shall meet semi-annually, in February and August, to:

1. Review current policies and recommend changes;



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2. Ensure current procedures meet the needs of the Department;
3. Approve incentive awards for participating Department personnel; and
4. Review and approve the semi-annual report for submission to the Chief of Police.

REVIEW