



**PORT AUTHORITY TRANS-HUDSON**

49 CFR Part 272  
**CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS PLAN**

2016

**Amended June 15, 2016**

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Inherent to PATH's mission is the provision and delivery of a safe system and environment for all customers and employees. While PATH makes every effort to ensure the safety of all employees and customers, trespasser incidents along the railroad right-of-way are an unfortunate reality for employees within the railroad industry. Railroad work carries a potential risk that employees may be directly involved in a critical incident, often outside the employee's control, which can lead to psychological stress. Individuals exposed to traumatic events may experience adverse changes in overall health. The provision of prompt and effective psychological services may mitigate these effects.

PATH and the Port Authority Office of Medical Services (OMS) have long recognized the importance of providing employees directly involved in critical incidents with necessary relief and treatment options. This Critical Incident Stress Plan (CISP) clarifies PATH's procedures for allowing a directly-involved employee to obtain relief from the remainder of their tour of duty, providing for the directly-involved employee's transportation home or to their reporting location, and offering a directly-involved employee appropriate services following a critical incident. This Plan will apply to all PATH employees who work at PATH.

Through the early intervention and treatment program of this CISP, PATH hopes both to reduce the likelihood that directly-involved employees will develop a stress condition following a critical incident, and to decrease the duration of the condition for employees who do. PATH expects that this CISP will increase employee retention and reduce long-term health consequences for employees involved in critical incidents.

PATH does not share its Right of Way with other railroads. Therefore, this plan does not cover the employees of railroads, which operate adjacent to PATH. PATH employees on other properties performing authorized duties will be covered under the provisions of this plan.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Covered Employee:** All PATH employees who are directly involved in, witness, or respond to a "critical incident" in the course of their work activities. This includes:

- A. Employees subject to the hours of service laws found at:
  - a. 49 U.S.C. 21103,
  - b. 49 U.S.C. 21104 (signal employees), or
  - c. 49 U.S. C. 21105 (dispatching service employees);
- B. Employees who are subject to the hours of service regulations at subpart F of 49 U.S.C. Part 228;
- C. Employees who inspect, install, repair, or maintain railroad right-of-way or structures;
- D. Employees who inspect, repair, or maintain locomotives, passenger cars, or MOW equipment;  
and
- E. Supervisory and exempt employees.

**Critical Incident:** An accident/incident reportable to FRA under 49 CFR Part 225 that results in a fatality, loss of limb or a similarly serious bodily injury; or a catastrophic accident/incident reportable to FRA under 49 CFR Part 225 that could reasonably be expected to impair a directly-involved employee's ability to perform his or her job duties safely. Critical Incidents include suicides and attempted suicides on PATH's property.

**Directly-Involved Employee:** Any covered employee:

- Whose actions are closely connected to the critical incident;
- Who witnesses the critical incident in person as it occurs or who witnesses the immediate effects of the critical incident in person; or
- Who is charged to directly intervene in, or respond to, the critical incident.

**Reporting Location:** An employee's regular reporting point at the beginning of the tour of duty. The term "Reporting Location" has the same meaning as "Home Terminal."

### **3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Office of Medical Services**

The Office of Medical Services (OMS) has the primary responsibility for the provision of psychological services for this program and the following specific responsibilities:

- Employee counseling after critical incidents, including field intervention if necessary
- Follow-up counseling services
- A Supervisory training module on how to handle traumatic events as part of PATH's safety training
- Marketing activities concerning available Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services for employees
- Maintenance of EAP skills

#### **System Safety & Environmental Management Division**

The System Safety & Environmental Management Division (SS&EM) is responsible for developing the written Critical Incident Stress Plan. SS&EM is also responsible for submission of the Plan to the FRA for approval.

#### **Field Supervisors**

Field Supervisors on duty are responsible for:

- Initial reporting of critical incidents
- Providing initial field response
- Being aware of EAP services provided by OMS
- Arranging transportation for the affected employees to their home if required

## **Superintendents**

Division Superintendents have the overall responsibility to be aware of and comply with all the policies and procedures involving critical incidents. They are also responsible for ensuring that their supervisory staff are aware of and follow the procedures outlined in this Plan.

## **PATH Train Control Center (PTCC)**

The Trainmaster and Assistant Trainmaster are responsible for receiving the accident/incident reports regarding any critical incident, communicating the information to others as required, and taking actions to ensure safe movement of trains and on-track equipment.

## **PATH Employees**

After a critical incident and as soon as practical, each directly involved PATH employees will be offered and provided with appropriate support services available in this critical incident stress plan, including appropriate relief options and transportation to the employee's reporting location, or home by car service, as necessary (i.e., if requested by the employee).

# **4. PROCEDURES**

## **Qualifying Incident**

A qualifying incident is a Critical Incident as defined in this plan. Near miss incidents are not covered by this Plan. They will be handled on an individual basis as deemed appropriate by the appropriate PATH Superintendent and OMS.

## **Communication**

In the event of a critical incident, the reporting employee will contact the Trainmaster at the PTCC. The PTCC will notify the following:

- PATH Director/General Manager (notifies Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer and Government & Community Relations (GOCOR))
- Division Superintendents
- Port Authority Police (PATH)
- SS&EM Manager (notifies FRA, NRC, OMS & PATH Accident Investigator)

## **Assessment**

The Trainmaster will communicate with the affected train crew for a preliminary assessment of the situation to determine the exact location of the incident, the circumstances, and the condition of the crew, passengers, train, and adjacent track(s).

When Transportation and Maintenance Supervisors arrive on the scene, they will assess the situation and notify the Trainmaster of further details of the incident. They will also briefly interview the crew to determine whether or not the incident meets the definition of a critical incident and to determine if the crew members meet the definition of a directly-involved employee. If necessary, an extra service or yard crew will be directed to the incident location.

Supervision in the affected Division will conduct the assessment for incidents that do not involve trains.

### **Employee Assignment**

Each directly-involved employee will be offered the option for and permitted timely relief from the balance of the duty tour after the employee has performed any actions necessary for the safety of persons and contemporaneous documentation of the incident, if requested by the employee. Before relieving them from the balance of their duty tour, the Supervisor on the scene must remind each directly-involved employee of the EAP services available to them as well as their right to request additional time off under this Plan.

The Trainmaster may modify service as required or institute reduced service until the track/tunnel section can be returned to normal service.

### **Support Services**

Each directly-involved employee will be offered the option for and permitted transportation to the directly-involved employee's reporting location, as necessary (i.e., if requested by the employee). In addition, each directly-involved employee will be offered the option for and permitted transportation to the employee's home by car service, if requested by the employee.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary program and is available to all employees, including maintenance, operating, and supervisory employees involved in or exposed to critical incidents. The EAP will offer counseling to all employees affected by the event. Employees may also see their personal physician as needed.

The Supervisor on the scene will inform the train crew and all other directly involved PATH employees, as soon as possible, that relief options, counseling, and other services are available to them. The information provided shall include the following:

- The availability of guidance, counseling services, and contact information for EAP services listed on OMS's MEDIGUIDE and on-line on the Employee Network (ENET).
- Relief from the balance of the tour of duty, as soon as practicable after the employee has performed any actions necessary for the safety of other employees or customers and contemporaneous documentation of the incident.
- Transportation either to the employee's reporting location or to the employee's residence by PATH or car service.

The Office of Medical Services (OMS) must permit each directly-involved employee such additional leave from normal duty as may be necessary and reasonable to receive preventive services or treatment related to the incident or both, provided the employee's clinical diagnosis supports the need for additional time off or the employee is in consultation with a health care professional related to the incident and such health care professional supports the need for additional time off in order for the employee to receive preventive services or treatment related to the incident, or both. The Supervisor shall inform the employee to consult with OMS about a possible need for additional time off.

The Supervisor shall make a list of all directly involved employees, and provide this list to the Division Superintendent or his/her designee.

Any directly involved employee experiencing a psychiatric or medical emergency should go to the nearest hospital emergency room if OMS is unavailable and should contact the Medical Absence Evaluation Unit as soon as practical (1-844-OMS-CALL).

The directly involved employee will be advised of the availability of the EAP's confidential services. If the directly involved employee elects to be seen by the EAP, an appointment will be provided as soon as practical after notification by the employee is made of the critical incident. On occasion, the EAP Counselor will go into the field for a critical incident, such as in the event of an employee death. The assessment will screen for signs/symptoms of psychological distress.

If indicated, the EAP Counselor will conduct an initial phone intake for an employee, which shall include screening to determine the need for immediate care as well as develop an appropriate plan of action. The intake includes offering the directly involved employee referrals to resources to ensure that the employee's needs are addressed appropriately.

EAP Counselors will evaluate or re-evaluate each directly involved employee as needed in order to determine whether a follow-up appointment or referral to an outside provider is necessary.

### **Duty Tour Relief**

Each directly involved employee must be offered timely relief by the Supervisor at the site of the critical incident, and permitted relief from the balance of the employee's duty tour subsequent to the critical incident as soon as practicable, after the employee has performed any actions necessary for the safety of other employees or customers and contemporaneous documentation of the incident. If there is not an OMS staff member present at the site of the critical incident, the Supervisor must permit this relief at the site so as not to delay the employee's relief.

PATH will grant relief from duty tours subsequent to the critical incident if requested by directly-involved employees, for a period of one to three days subsequent to the critical incident, to be determined on a case-by-case basis by OMS/EAP.

Directly involved employees will be evaluated by OMS and will be permitted additional leave from normal duty as may be necessary and reasonable to receive preventive services or treatment related to the incident or both, provided the employee's clinical diagnosis supports the need for additional time off. If an employee requests additional leave after consultation with an outside health care professional, leave will be granted if such health care professional supports the need for additional time off in order for the employee to receive preventive services or treatment related to the incident, or both.

### **Transportation**

Timely transportation to the affected employee's reporting location or residence will be provided if the employee requests it or if PATH deems it necessary. The Port Authority Operations Services Department, Central Automotive Division manages a Port Authority wide Car Service Contract, which is available for use by PATH. Supervisory employees will be given the account numbers for each car service. The Car Service works as follows:

If the person is getting picked up from New Jersey  
Call: (718) 438-1100 (Executive Transport)

If the person is getting picked up from New York  
Call: (718) 741-3711 or (800) 533-6325 (Primary) (Skyline)  
(718) 438-1100 (Secondary) (Executive Transport)

Tell the employee to have the Driver give them a voucher.

When making car service arrangements, provide the following information:

- Account Number
- Employee or Badge Number
- Telephone Number (rider's cell number or your work number)
- Organization Number
- Pickup Location
- Date of Pickup
- Time of Pickup
- Stops along the way

## **5. TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION**

### **EAP Staff Training**

All OMS EAP staff have received appropriate training and have experience in Critical Incident Stress and counseling for employees who have been involved in critical incidents.

### **Initial Training**

All covered service employees are given an overview of the EAP during their initial training. During this orientation, there will be a discussion of Critical Incidents. Pre-incident education and training for employees will be structured to provide employees information about normal reactions to stress, options for leave, counseling, and other support services.

### **Periodic Training**

Supervisory employees who may need to respond to critical incidents will receive training developed in accordance with 49 CFR 243. This training will involve identifying behaviors and symptoms that they might encounter at the scene and how to interact with affected employees. OMS or an approved training entity will conduct this training as part of PATH's safety training program.

### **Pamphlets and Flyers**

In addition to formal training, OMS/EAP advertises its services at various locations throughout the property as well as on ENET. These pamphlets and brochures with educational information focus on stress and coping mechanisms to deal with stress.

## **6. PERIODIC REVIEW**

SS&EM will conduct periodic reviews to ensure compliance with this policy. The written program will be periodically reviewed. Changes made to the document will be filed with the FRA and covered employees will be advised.

## **7. POINTS OF CONTACT**

### **Martha Gulick**

Manager, System Safety & Environmental Management

One PATH Plaza, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor

Jersey City, NJ 07306

P: (201) 216-6258

E: [mgulick@panynj.gov](mailto:mgulick@panynj.gov)

### **Astagne Avril**

Chief, Operations Examiner

One PATH Plaza, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor

Jersey City, NJ 07306

P: (201) 216-6462

E: [aavril@panynj.gov](mailto:aavril@panynj.gov)