



Critical Incident Stress Management Mission Overview



US Army Corps of Engineers®

Questions, comments, and suggestions related to this overview are encouraged. For more information, please contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Office of Homeland Security, Civil Emergency Management, 441 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20314-1000.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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Scope of Critical Incident Management Mission

The Critical Incident Stress Management Program (CISM) is available to assist Corps Emergency responders in coping with the stressful working conditions that occur when responding to natural or manmade disasters. CISM is designed to provide immediate peer support for these types of work environments by reducing the overall impact of acute or cumulative stress and to accelerate recovery in people who are having normal reactions to abnormal events. Working in such environments is stressful for many reasons including working long hours for an extended period of time under intense pressure, working in disaster zones with disaster victims, and seeing loss of life, injuries, destruction of property and communities. As a Commander's tool, this program also demonstrates that the US Army Corps of Engineers is an organization that promotes a respectful, supportive, and healthy work environment.

The USACE Homeland Security Office strongly believes that employees who are asked or volunteer to work under emergency conditions need to pay special attention to their mental-health and well being. Therefore, the USACE Homeland Security office has incorporated the CISM program into its disaster operations protocols whenever needed. A CISM program can be implemented in two ways. The first is an on-the-ground-support-team, or Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), where team members deploy to the USACE field offices and work sites. The second method is through "virtual" means by using reachback resources without team member deployments. The CISM program is a standing program throughout most of the USACE made available to all Corps team members by the Chief of Engineers

Concept of Operations

CISM resources can deploy to any event, requiring USACE to respond. In most cases, this will occur when an RFO is established, which typically signifies a larger event with associated recovery missions. However, other events without an RFO will also require a CISM element to deploy.

Initial deployment will be a 2-3 person "Recon Team". Ideal deployment is prior to a disaster, or immediately after. The Recon Team will spend several days in an area to 1) provide critical information on CISM to the Commander, 2) scope out any potential CISM mission, and 3) initiate any necessary logistical functions. The Recon Team will also make contact with the local Employee Assistance Program (EAP) manager and/or contractor to facilitate a higher level of care should it be needed. CISM peer supporters work closely with the EAP to provide the highest level of care for employee(s) experiencing traumatic events. The Recon Team will present its findings to the Commander to determine whether a CIRT is needed, and if so recommend the appropriate size. CIRT will deploy based on the Commander's concurrence.

A CIRT will deploy and merge with the Recon Team. It is preferred that there is at least one CIRT team assigned per state per event. At present strength, two CIRT Teams are available for deployment nationwide, thus one CIRT Team may have to cover more than one state or RFO. CIRT team members are rotated in and out every thirty days.

ACISM Team Leader (TL) is responsible for operations and accountability of CISM resources in the field. The CISM TL reports to the Commander or designee. This designee typically will be the Safety and Occupational Health Manager. SITREPS available from the safety manager will help focus the CISM Team's efforts in many cases. The CISM TL will also develop a "mission closeout" strategy to determine when to end on the ground support and transition to only virtual support.



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All deployments will be initiated from the requesting district via ENGLink with coordination from the CISM National Operations Center for team selection.

CRT Team

Team Composition - A Recon Team consists of 2 or 3 experienced Subject Matter Experts and can typically deploy with 2 days notice. A full CIRT team consists of 3 or 4 peer supporters with experience in one-on-one interventions, crises management briefings, pre-deployment education, and defusings. A CIRT Team can deploy with 3 days notice

Deployment Duration - Typical deployments are for 30 days.

Cost Estimate - The cost estimate for the Recon team for 1 week is \$19.6K for two persons including travel and per diem. The cost estimate for the CIRT Team for 30 days is \$168K for 4 persons including travel and per diem.

CISM Team Deployment Activation Contracts

The CISM National Operations Center is located at SWD. The following points of contact should be used for coordination and deployments:

Terry Holt, CISM Co-Program Manager
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Funding

Funding for the CISM Recon team and the full CIRT team will be attached as an item under the Regional Activation Mission Assignment. Close coordination with the ESF #3 Team Leaders at the FEMA Joint Field offices is required for justification of the mission.

For more information, Division and District POC's, FAQ's, and Brochures, can be found at: <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/cism/cism.html>.

