



July 8, 2021

TO: FIRESOPE Board of Directors
23300 Castle Street
Riverside, CA 92518

FROM: FIRESOPE Operations Team, Task Force, & Behavioral Health
Specialist Group

SUBJECT: Request for Recognition and Naming of Behavioral Health Positions

REQUESTED ACTION:

The Behavioral Health Specialist Group seeks Board of Director approval to submit an NWCG Position Naming Board request with all required documentation to have these positions recognized and potentially approved by the Naming Board.

APPROVAL:

The FIRESOPE Board of Directors approved the requested action on July 8th, 2021.

SUMMARY

With FIRESOPE creating the Behavioral Health Working Group and now the inception of the Specialist Group, we have been working together to create industry standards for the recognition and proper utilization of behavioral health personnel and positions in the fire service. Two of the positions are currently in the national ordering system (IROC), however other positions that are utilized on incidents of all sizes are not. The Critical Incident Stress Lead (CISL) and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) positions are currently in the IROC system for rapid ordering on federal, state, and local incidents. Other important positions that are used daily on behavioral health incidents are Culturally Competent Clinicians, Chaplains, and the highly trained Crisis Response dogs and their handlers. These three positions are not included in IROC and do not have the ability to be ordered as such. Currently, when there is a need for an agency clinician, chaplain, or crisis K9, they are ordered as technical specialists or, at times, are sent by agencies independent of the ordering system. These methods of ordering, while a workaround, are a temporary solution and should have a set solution in place.

The permanent solution would be a formal request to the National Wildfire Coordination



Group (NWCG) Position Naming Board. This request would recognize the three positions described below and our recommendation of the four-letter designation attached to each position.

RECOMMENDATIONS

New Position: The Critical Incident Clinician (CICL) reports to the Critical Incident Stress Lead (CISL) at an incident and works within the Critical Incident Peer Support Team (CIPS). It is critically important that this person be culturally competent to the fire service and meet all qualifications in the Qualification Guide for that position. This position is still under development for a recognized task book, however, is currently and historically utilized for the short-term stabilization of individuals on incidents. The Behavioral Health Specialist Group built recognized qualification guides for each position and is currently building task books for all 5 behavioral health positions as part of the 2021 Behavioral Health Specialist Group Plan of Work (POW). It is recommended that the position be developed with an associated task book in place no later than January 1, 2024.

New Position: Critical Incident Stress Chaplain (CISC) reports to the CISL at an incident. This position is a non-denominational, faith-based qualified peer supporter that responds to a critical incident and works within the Critical Incident Peer Support Team (CIPS). The CISC members shall have training in behavioral health and meet all qualifications in the Qualification Guide for that position. This position task book is under development and is currently an additional position on behavioral health activations. The faith-based portion of the chaplain position is a secondary aspect to the critical incident training that each assigned chaplain is required to obtain. It is recommended that the position be developed with an associated task book in place no later than January 01, 2024.

New Position: Critical Incident Stress K9 (CISK) reports to the CISL at an incident. This position works within the Critical Incident Peer Support Team (CIPS). The term K9 is the accepted verbiage for a “working” class dog, and the dog and handler shall be certified to current national standards for Therapy Dog (complex rating) or Animal-Assisted Crisis Response (AACR). These teams have been utilized and proven to provide care for individuals for the last several years on incidents of all types and complexities. The crisis response K9 teams are a valuable tool on the CIPS team when utilized appropriately. The CISK members shall have training in behavioral health and meet all qualifications in the Qualification Guide for that position. This position task book is under development with a planned completion date of January 1, 2024.

CONCLUSION:

These positions have been historically utilized for the behavioral health and well being of first responders on critical incidents. The critical incident stress position and usage of trained clinician and chaplains has been in place since the 1980’s with its inception from the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). The newer crisis response



K9 positions have shown great success since being incorporated into the teams. All positions have been approved by federal, state, and local partners in the specialist group as being integral parts of the CIPS team. These three positions should be considered by the NWCG Position Naming Board, and if approved, be included in IROC for the efficient ordering of qualified personnel.

Approved: July 8th, 2021