	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department		SOP
	Standard Operating Procedure	Crisis Intervention Team SOP	
		Effective Date 03/12/2013	1 of 3

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures under which the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) shall operate to ensure a coordinated response in providing services to consumers involved in a mental crisis.

II. POLICY

Law Enforcement Agencies in Mecklenburg County will make every effort to ensure that designated officers are trained to handle situations involving the mentally ill population. Through a partnership with Mecklenburg County Provided Services Organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and Central Piedmont Community College, selected officers will be certified in crisis intervention and use that training in their law enforcement duties.


III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Crisis Intervention Team (CIT): A partnership between local law enforcement, mental health professionals, advocates, and community services providers that seek to provide safety, services, and jail diversion to mental health consumers and their families.
- B. CIT Officer: Any law enforcement personnel who successfully completes the prescribed forty hour block of instruction required by the NC CIT Program Administrator.
- C. Consumer: Any person who could be diagnosed with any mental illness or disability affecting their well-being.
- D. Crisis Incident: Any event where a consumer or their family is in need of mental health, law enforcement, or community assistance.
- E. CIT Pin: The Departmentally approved pin which is awarded at the completion of the prescribed CIT Training. The pin will be furnished by Mecklenburg County Provided Services Organization.
- F. Provided Services Organization (PSO): The Mecklenburg County operated service delivery organization for mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities services in Mecklenburg County, formerly part of Area Mental Health.
- G. Mobile Crisis Team: A team of mental health professionals who have been contracted with Mecklenburg County Area Mental Health to assist CMPD employees in their interactions with mental health consumers. The Mobile Crisis Team members are available to CMPD employees 24/7/365.

IV. PROCEDURES

CIT officers will use their training and specialized skills to attempt to better handle situations where mentally ill consumers come in contact with law enforcement. Through their training, officers will assess the situation, identify the issue, and respond accordingly based on their skills as a CIT officer.

- A. Training

	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department		SOP
	Standard Operating Procedure	Crisis Intervention Team SOP	
		Effective Date 03/12/2013	2 of 3

1. Division commanders will identify officers who excel in communication skills and on-scene problem solving to represent their division for CIT training.
2. Officers will complete a 40 hour block of instruction certified by Central Piedmont Community College.
3. Officers successfully completing the training will receive a certificate and approved CIT uniform pen.


B. Lineup Identification

1. Upon successfully completing the training, officers will inform their supervisors that they are now certified CIT officers.
2. Supervisors will ensure that these officers are properly documented on the shift lineups as CIT officers.
3. Dispatchers will be aware of CIT officers working in order to dispatch calls appropriately that may involve contact with a mentally ill consumer.

C. SUPERVISORS

The Patrol Supervisor on duty in a district will be responsible for the following duties relating to Crisis Intervention Team activities that occur during his or her tour of duty:

1. Radio Communications
 - a. Listen to ensure that CIT officers are dispatched or volunteer for calls for service involving persons displaying signs of mental illness or acting upon extreme levels of stressful emotion.
 - b. Monitor radio traffic to ensure CIT officers have proper backup and are following established safety protocols. This should be done with the knowledge that mental health calls can become volatile quickly and sufficient back up helps protect the safety of officers and the person they are dealing with.
2. Resource Allocation
 - a. Dealing with CIT calls requires that officers take time to acquire a deeper understanding of the issues faced by the person they are trying to help. Allotting a CIT officer time to follow CIT communication procedures typically results in more successful outcomes for a given call for service and for that citizen in the future. Freeing the officer from other responsibilities during the time of that call is essential.
 - b. CIT officers are well suited to dealing with emotionally and mentally disturbed individuals on a short term basis. Long term resolution of those problems requires additional resources, such as access to the Mobile

	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department		SOP
	Standard Operating Procedure	Crisis Intervention Team SOP	
		Effective Date 03/12/2013	3 of 3

Crisis Team and contact with community treatment agencies. Supervisors should ensure and facilitate access to these resources.

3. Direct supervision
 - a. Supervisors should respond to CIT and other mental health related calls to ensure good safety practice by their officers.
 - b. Some mental health related calls for service are outside the scope of CIT officers' training. Among these are active suicide attempts, barricaded subjects and hostage takings. CIT officers are not qualified as members of the Crisis Negotiation Team and should never be considered a substitute for accessing the Negotiation Team.
4. Recruiting
 - a. Supervisors should be alert to officers who show potential to become CIT certified. CIT training is administered to officers who have their supervisors recommendation and who accept/seek the training voluntarily.
 - b. Qualities of potential CIT officers include:
 - o Strong speaking and listening skills;
 - o Self-motivation;
 - o Compassion;
 - o Patience;
 - o Interest in assisting persons with a mental illness;
 - o Ability and motivation to take responsibility on challenging calls for service.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Telecommunicators shall attempt to compile the necessary information and record this data in CAD. They will identify obvious mental health related calls requiring CIT Officer response.
2. Telecommunicators shall attempt to dispatch CIT Officers as the primary responder, or will direct them to the event when they are available. If one is not available in that division, the dispatcher will attempt to find the closest CIT officer in neighboring divisions.
3. Telecommunicators are a good resource to ensure CIT Officers are dispatched appropriately, but it is primarily the responsibility of the trained officers and their supervisors to assess and respond to mental health related calls for service.

V. REFERENCES

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