



Ligonier Valley Police Department Ligonier, Pennsylvania

General Order ☒
Special Order / Plan ☐
Personnel Order ☐

ORDER NUMBER

Subject

Critical Incident

Date of Issue

September 8, 2026

Effective Date

September 8, 2026

Expiration Date

Until replaced or rescinded.

Issued by:

Chief of Police

Amends

All previous applicable orders.

Rescinds

All previous applicable orders.

PLEAC Standard

Distribution

General Order Manual

This order consists of the following sections:

➤ **Critical Incident**

I. Purpose

The purpose of this regulation is to establish uniform policy and procedures concerning officer-involved shootings/serious police incidents involving members/enforcement officers and to protect the member's/enforcement officer's well-being, while preserving the interests of the public and the integrity of the investigation.

II. Definitions

The following words and phrases, when used in this regulation, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- A. **Involved Member/Enforcement Officer:** A member/enforcement officer who, pursuant to their duties, directly caused the death or serious bodily injury of another, or took action which caused another to face near certain death or serious bodily injury. Final determination of whether a member/enforcement officer falls within this definition will be made by the Chief of Police.
- B. **Full Duty:** A member's/enforcement officers normally assigned duties and job functions.

- C. Administrative Duty: A modified-Duty assignment where a member performs work which may be outside their normal assigned duties, functions and responsibilities. This work may include station duties which limit exposure to public interaction, or other assignments as authorized by the Chief of Police.
- D. Officer-involved Shooting: An incident where a member/enforcement officer discharges a firearm at an individual to stop the action, or an individual discharges a firearm at a member/enforcement officer, regardless of whether the member/enforcement officer, or the individual is injured or killed. It shall include when the member/enforcement officer discharges a weapon to provide directed fire, or shoots at an occupant of a vehicle. It shall not include unintentional weapon discharges, discharges occurring for purposes of firearms training, shooting aggressive animals, euthanizing sick or injured animals, or firing rescue shots.
- E. Public Safety Statement: A. brief factual account collected individually from the involved members(s)/enforcement officer(s) to establish the level of danger that may still exist, aid the initial police response, and focus the preliminary investigation.
- F. Secure Location: Any location out of view of the public, which affords a reasonable degree of security and privacy for Department personnel.
- G. Serious Police Incident: Any incident involving the use of physical force or any other action in which death or serious bodily injury occurs as a result of the actions of a member/enforcement officer while performing their duties, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Police pursuits resulting in death or serious bodily injury to any person.
 - 2. Death of a prisoner while in the custody, control, or oversight of a member/enforcement officer.
- H. Tactical Assurance Program: An individualized program designed to be a confidence builder to reinforce the tactical and survival skills of an involved member/enforcement officer in an officer-involved shooting/serious police incident. The Tactical Assurance Program (TAP) is:
 - 1. Administered by the Bureau of Training and Education.
 - 2. May include firearms, weapons, driving, or other pertinent tactical skills.

III. Officer-Involved Shooting/Serious Police Incident Investigations and Incident Management

A Officer-involved shootings/serious police incidents *may* involve several separate investigations. The investigations may include:

1. A criminal investigation of the incident.
2. A criminal investigation of the involved member/enforcement officer.
3. A crash investigation.
4. A coroner's inquest.
5. An administrative investigation.

B Incident management shall be guided by the following tenets, when appropriate:

1. National Incident Management System.
2. Westmoreland County District Attorney's Office
3. When an officer-involved shooting/serious police incident occurs within the Department's primary jurisdiction and involves personnel from another law enforcement agency, the Westmoreland County Detectives shall be responsible for the criminal investigation. A supervisor shall be assigned as liaison with the other agency.

IV. Duties and Responsibilities

A. Chief of Police or his designee

1. When applicable, ensure the duty status of each involved member/enforcement officer is modified to paid administrative leave.

2. Be the approving authority for investigation interviews of an involved member/enforcement officer to be conducted within 72 hours of the incident.
 3. Monitor the status and investigative information related to all officer-involved shootings/serious police incidents and determine when the involved member/enforcement officer can be returned to full-duty status. Ensure any detected issues concerning the fitness of the involved member/enforcement officer are addressed.
 4. When the determination to return an involved member/enforcement officer to full-duty status is reached, ensure he/she is advised of the decision via Department Correspondence.
 5. Respond to all officer-involved shootings/serious police incidents involving members, when appropriate.
 6. Ensure notifications are made to the proper personnel including coroner (if applicable), District Attorney and the FOP Lodge 23 representatives.
 7. Inform the Westmoreland County Detectives of the incident and provide a synopsis of the circumstances and the Department's response.
- B. Notifications of Line-of-Duty Death or Serious Injury of Personnel
Ensuring priority is given to notifying the member's/enforcement officer's family
1. Notification to an effected member's family shall be done by the Chief of Police or his designee.
 2. Family shall be offered transportation in lieu of driving themselves if family requests to be with an injured member/enforcement officer.
 3. A member/enforcement officer shall be assigned to the family to provide security, support, informational updates, etc.
- C. First Uninvolved Member/Enforcement Officer/Shift Supervisor
Responding to the Scene

1. Assume the role of Incident Commander until properly relieved by higher authority, when appropriate.
2. Obtain critical information regarding the nature of the event at hand.
3. Ascertain injuries, any danger that might still exist for the community and for law enforcement members, and to prevent further harm
4. Communicate essential investigative information such as the status and/or location of the suspect(s), the location of evidence which needs to be protected, the name(s)/location of witness(es) who need to be isolated and interviewed, and the parameters of the incident scene
5. Relay any available descriptive information regarding the fleeing suspect(s) or other appropriate information to the applicable Communications Desk Unit personnel
6. Document names and contact information of all persons present at the scene for the following purposes: to capture potential witness information in the event persons depart the area prior to the arrival of investigators and to account for all responding personnel
7. Contact the Chief of Police and inform of the situation
8. If an involved member/enforcement officer is injured, assign an uninvolved member/enforcement officer to accompany the injured member/enforcement officer to the hospital and to remain with the injured member/enforcement officer until properly relieved
9. If the involved member/enforcement officer is not injured, assign an uninvolved member/enforcement officer to accompany the involved member/enforcement officer to a secure location, and to remain with the involved member/enforcement officer while monitoring their overall well-being
10. Collect the weapon(s) and associated equipment of involved members. This shall be the responsibility of a supervisor unless one is not available
11. Establish a media staging area as time permits or assign this

task to the Public Information Officer

12. Names of involved member or civilians shall not be released until confirmed by the proper authority and authorized by the Chief of Police

D. Member/Affected Officer

Member(s)/enforcement officer(s) at the scene of an officer-involved shooting/serious police incident shall take all reasonable measures necessary and appropriate action to protect their safety, the safety of others, and to preserve evidence essential to the investigation. To the extent possible and when appropriate, the member(s)/enforcement officer(s) shall:

1. Ensure threats to officer safety and the safety of others are contained/neutralized
2. Administer first aid to oneself, victim(s), and/or suspect(s) pending the arrival of advanced medical personnel
3. Establish Incident Command with a designated Incident Commander who shall assume that role until properly relieved
4. Request a supervisor, additional personnel, emergency medical services, and/or other required assistance
5. Request any available descriptive information regarding fleeing suspects to the appropriate Communications Desk Unit personnel
6. Provide a PSS when requested by a Supervisor, Incident Commander, or the first responding uninvolved member/enforcement officer
7. Supervisor shall secure involved firearms(s) in order to preserve the scene; all reasonable efforts shall be made to secure the involved firearm(s) in a discreet manner at a secure location. However, members/enforcement officers shall be cognizant of any unaccounted-for suspect(s), their own safety, the safety of others, and their ability to maintain control of the scene when determining where or how to secure involved firearm(s). Members/enforcement officers should not open, unload, reload, or otherwise handle the involved firearms(s) unless such actions are necessary to ensure the safety of the member/enforcement officer or others.
 - a. Department-issued handguns and/or personally owned handguns should be holstered or secured in place as

evidence

8. Officers involved shall be entitled to 72 consecutive hours of administrative leave

V. Member/Enforcement Officer Treatment

- A. The involved member/enforcement officer shall be removed from the incident scene as quickly and discretely as possible
- B. In order to ensure the safety of the involved member/enforcement officer and to maintain the integrity of the investigation, an uninvolved member/enforcement officer shall be assigned to accompany the involved member/enforcement officer. The accompanying member/enforcement officer shall remain with the involved member/enforcement officer until he/she is transported to a secure location and the accompanying member/enforcement officer is relieved by the appropriate personnel.
NOTE: The Incident Commander shall ensure appropriate transportation and/or escort is arranged for the involved member/enforcement officer.
- C. Whenever possible, the involved member/enforcement officer shall retain their weapon until it can be collected in a discreet manner at a secure location
 1. Discretion shall be used when relieving an involved member/enforcement officer of their duty/involved weapon
 2. Whenever appropriate, the involved member/enforcement officer shall be issued a replacement weapon as soon as possible
 3. The involved member/enforcement officer should be kept informed of when their weapon is likely to be returned
- D. The involved member/enforcement officer shall be afforded the opportunity to speak with a representative of MAP and FOP Lodge 23 as soon as possible
- E. A criminal investigatory interview of an involved member/enforcement officer shall not be conducted until member/enforcement officer is afforded the opportunity to consult with counsel
- F. Criminal/Administrative interviews of an involved member/enforcement officer shall not be conducted during these 72 hours unless circumstances warrant an earlier interview as authorized by the Chief of Police; or the involved member/enforcement officer requests an earlier interview
- G. Rights of the involved member/enforcement officer:
 1. Miranda Rights shall be issued to the involved member/enforcement officer who is being interviewed as part of a criminal investigation. NOTE: The issuance of Miranda Rights in these circumstances does not

necessarily connote custody, but delineates the criminal investigation from the internal administrative investigation.

2. An Administrative Warning (Garrity) shall be given to all members/enforcement officers or other applicable personnel being interviewed as part of the administrative investigation
- H. The involved member/enforcement officer shall not be referred to, or designated as a suspect in any investigate report until all the facts are gathered and the district attorney has rendered a prosecutorial decision
- I. The involved member/enforcement officer should be provided with the opportunity to contact their family member(s) as soon as possible
- J. Tactical Assurance Program: When applicable, the involved member/enforcement officer may attend one day TAP training at the State Police Academy or applicable off-site training location. The following provisions will apply to TAP:
1. The involved member/enforcement officer may be accompanied by a member/enforcement officer of their choosing, who was not involved in the officer-involved shooting/serious police incident
- K. Return to Full-Duty Status
1. An officer/affected member(s) shall not be returned to active full duty until an internal investigation has been completed
 2. An officer/affected members shall have an in person physiological examination before returning to full duty status
 3. The Department shall comply with Act 59 of 2020 in relation to mental health evaluations when an Officer uses lethal force, when an officer requests an evaluation or when referred by the Chief of Police
 4. A member/enforcement officer placed on administrative duty shall be returned to full duty upon order of the Chief of Police after evaluation of the following: compliance with department regulations; prosecutorial determination, if applicable; administrative recommendations; TAP, if available; a psychologist recommendation, if applicable; and other appropriate requirements

Effective:

By order of:

Chief of Police