

Trauma and Grief Support (TAGS) Program

911.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for the use of Trauma and Grief Support program members.

The TAGS Program is secular in purpose. Although TAGS volunteers will be performing trauma and grief support traditionally provided by chaplains, TAGS services are to be rendered in a strictly secular manner.

TAGS volunteers are not intended to supplant crisis counselors or mental health providers. Their purpose is to assist public safety personnel by gathering victims' support systems (family, clergy, etc.) and offering comfort. They are also to be available to public safety personnel to assist with the stresses associated with critical incidents and emergency responder work.

911.2 POLICY

Members of the Davis Police and Fire Departments (collectively, the "Departments") routinely respond to emergency or crisis situations where community members may be afflicted with grief and/or other trauma. During critical periods when the first responders are attending to the emergency or crisis, community members can often be left without necessary trauma and grief support, which only increases the amount of grief and/or trauma a community member may face.

The Davis Public Safety Trauma and Grief Support (TAGS) volunteers work in conjunction with the Departments to assist on-scene community members who are experiencing grief and/or trauma.

Additionally, because the constant stresses associated with critical incidents and first responder duties can negatively impact public safety personnel, TAGS volunteers will also be accessible to Davis Police and Fire Department personnel as well.

The Davis Police Department shall ensure that TAGS volunteers are properly appointed, trained and supervised to carry out their responsibilities without financial compensation.

911.3 ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for participation as a TAGS volunteer may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Being above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable and able to teach.
- b. Having a good reputation in the community.
- c. Prior experience in crisis intervention.
- d. Possession of a valid driver license.

The Police and Fire Chiefs may apply exceptions for eligibility based on organizational needs and the qualifications of the individual.

911.4 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

The Departments shall endeavor to recruit and appoint only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral and professional standards set forth by the Departments.

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911.4.1 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

TAGS candidates shall successfully complete the following process prior to appointment:

- a. Submit the appropriate written application.
- b. Include a recommendation from employers or volunteer programs.
- c. Interview with the Police Chief and/or Fire Chief and the program coordinator.
- d. Successfully complete an appropriate-level police background investigation, including "LiveScan" fingerprinting.
- e. Complete a course of first responder crisis intervention training, including critical incident trauma and grief, confidentiality, mandatory reporting, giving death notifications and maintaining scene integrity.

TAGS volunteers are Davis Police Department and Davis Fire Department volunteers and, like all other volunteers, serve at the pleasure and discretion of the Chiefs. TAGS volunteers shall have no property interest in continued appointment.

911.5 IDENTIFICATION AND UNIFORMS

As representatives of the Departments, TAGS volunteers are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. TAGS volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Uniforms and necessary safety equipment will be provided for each TAGS volunteer. Identification symbols worn by TAGS volunteers shall be different and distinct from those worn by regular volunteers through the inclusion of "Trauma & Grief Support Volunteer" on the uniform and not reflect any religious affiliation.

TAGS volunteers will be issued Davis Police Department identification cards, which must be carried at all times while on-duty. The identification cards will be the standard Davis Police Department identification cards, with the exception that "Trauma & Grief Support Volunteer" will be indicated on the cards. TAGS volunteers shall be required to return any issued uniforms or department property at the termination of service. Immediately upon termination, for any reason, TAGS Volunteers shall render their Davis Police Department ID card.

TAGS volunteers shall conform to any uniform regulations and appearance standards required by the Departments.

911.6 TAGS COORDINATOR

The Police Chief and Fire Chief will delegate certain responsibilities to a volunteer TAGS Program Coordinator. The coordinator shall report to the Deputy Director of Police Services at the Police Department.

The TAGS coordinator shall serve as the liaison between the TAGS volunteers and the Departments. The function of the coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective TAGS management within the Departments, and to direct and assist efforts to jointly provide more productive TAGS services.

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The TAGS coordinator may appoint a senior TAGS or other designee to assist in the coordination of TAGS volunteers and their activities.

The responsibilities of the coordinator or the authorized designee include, but are not limited to:

- a. Recruiting, selecting and training qualified TAGS volunteers.
- b. Conducting TAGS meetings.
- c. Establishing and maintaining a TAGS callout roster.
- d. Maintaining records for each TAGS volunteer.
- e. Tracking and evaluating the contribution of TAGS volunteers.
- f. Maintaining a record of TAGS volunteer's schedules and work hours.
- g. Completing and disseminating, as appropriate, all necessary paperwork and information.
- h. Planning periodic recognition events.
- i. Maintaining liaison with other agency TAGS or chaplain coordinators.

An evaluation of the overall use of TAGS volunteers will be conducted on an annual basis by the coordinator.

911.7 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TAGS volunteers assist the Departments, its members and the community, as needed. TAGS volunteers may be assigned to areas within the Departments as needed.

- a. TAGS volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Departments.
- b. All TAGS volunteers will be assigned to duties by the TAGS coordinator or the authorized designee.
- c. TAGS volunteers may not proselytize or attempt to recruit members of the Departments or the public into a religious affiliation while representing themselves as TAGS volunteers.
- d. TAGS volunteers may not accept gratuities for any service or any subsequent actions or follow-up contacts that were provided while functioning as a TAGS volunteer.
- e. Report immediately to the Incident Commander, once on scene of any incident.

911.7.1 COMPLIANCE

TAGS volunteers are volunteer members of the Departments, and except as otherwise specified within this policy, are required to comply with the Police Department Volunteer Program Policy and other applicable police and fire policies.

911.7.2 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

- a. TAGS volunteers will be scheduled to be on-call.
- b. Generally, each TAGS volunteer will serve with Davis Police and/or Fire Department personnel a minimum of eight hours per month.
- c. TAGS volunteers shall be permitted to ride with officers and firefighters during any shift and observe operations provided the Police Department Watch Commander or the Fire Division Chief, as applicable, has been notified and has approved the activity.

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- d. In responding to incidents, a TAGS volunteer shall never function as an officer or firefighter.
- e. When responding to in-progress calls for service, TAGS volunteers may be required to stand-by in a secure area until the situation has been deemed safe.
- f. TAGS volunteers shall serve only within the jurisdiction of the Departments unless otherwise authorized by a Chief or the authorized designee.

911.7.3 ASSISTING THE DEPARTMENT

The responsibilities of a TAGS volunteer include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting members in the diffusion of a conflict or incident, when requested.
- (b) Responding to natural and accidental deaths, suicides and attempted suicides, and any other incident that in the judgment of the Police Watch Commander or Fire Battalion Commander's aids in accomplishing the mission of the Departments.
- (c) Responding to all major disasters, such as natural disasters, major fires, bombings and similar critical incidents.
- (d) Being on-call and, if possible, on-duty during major demonstrations or any public function that requires the presence of a large number of public safety personnel.
- (e) Attending department and academy graduations, ceremonies and social events as requested by the Departments.
- (f) Participating in in-service training classes.
- (g) Willingness to train others to enhance the effectiveness of the Departments.
- (h) Conducting death notifications.

911.7.4 ASSISTING THE COMMUNITY

The duties of a chaplain related to the community include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Fostering familiarity with the role of law enforcement in the community.
- (b) Providing an additional link between the community, other TAGS or chaplain coordinators and the Department.
- (c) Providing liaison with various civic, business and religious organizations.
- (d) Promptly facilitating requests for representatives or leaders of various denominations.
- (e) Assisting the community in any other function as needed or requested.
- (f) Making referrals in cases where specialized attention is needed or in cases that are beyond the TAGS's ability to assist.

911.7.5 TAGS MEETINGS

All TAGS volunteers are required to attend scheduled meetings. Any absences must be satisfactorily explained to the TAGS coordinator.

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911.7.6 ASSISTING DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

The responsibilities of TAGS volunteers related to department members include, but are not limited to:

- a. At the request of a Chief, assist in making notification to families of members who have been seriously injured or killed and, after notification, responding to the hospital or home of the member.
- b. Visiting sick or injured members in the hospital or at home.
- c. Attending and participating, when requested, in funerals of active or retired members.
- d. Serving as a resource for members when dealing with the public in incidents, such as accidental deaths, suicides, suicidal subjects, serious accidents, drug and alcohol abuse and other such situations that may arise.
- e. Providing trauma and grief support for members and their families.
- f. Being alert to the needs of members and their families.

911.7.7 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

At the request of the Police Watch Commander, Fire Battalion Chief or an Incident Commander, a TAGS volunteer will be contacted by Police Dispatch for deployment.

The Commander will provide the following information:

- a. Location where the TAGS volunteer should respond.
- b. Agency and officer in charge of scene.
- c. Nature of call-out (traffic fatality, fire, suicide, etc.)
- d. Assistance being requested.
- e. Identity of victims(s)/person(s) and/or other TAGS volunteers who are being called to assist
- f. Any special circumstances/instructions.

Upon arrival at the location of the call, the TAGS volunteers will report to the on-scene Incident Commander.

- a. TAGS will receive their assignment instructions from the Incident Commander, and act under the direction of the Incident Commander or designee until completion of the call-out.
- b. TAGS will render assistance to on-scene public safety personnel, by carrying out the TAGS assignment as directed. TAGS volunteer duties may include, but are not limited to:
 1. Contacting victims or other community members who are experiencing grief/trauma as a consequence of the critical incident.
 2. Providing a comforting, respectful presence.
 3. Assisting community members in contacting their personal support systems (family members, clergy, employers, schools).
 4. Remaining present with community members until their personal support systems respond. TAGS may travel separately to hospital or other location to re-join and attend to the community members there. If TAGS are instructed to travel from the initial scene to

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another location, TAGS are to ensure the Incident Commander or designee and Police Dispatch are aware of their reassignment, and inform Police Dispatch when they reach their new location.

5. Answering questions about public safety procedures, such as where the primary victim(s) will be transported, or in the case of a fatality, explaining the coroner's protocols, what will likely happen next, and steps for obtaining a release of the remains.

6. Providing contact information for corollary services: local mortuaries, bio-hazard cleaning services, etc.

7. When the TAGS are finished with the call, they are to notify the Incident Commander or designee at the scene that they are departing. They are also to contact Police Dispatch and advise that the TAGS portion of the call is closed.

8. TAGS are to complete any written report/documentation of the TAGS call, and submit the same to the program coordinator as soon as possible after call, and no later than 24 hours after call closure. If, for any reason, a TAGS volunteer is not able to submit the call documentation within 24 hours, they will report to the program coordinator the circumstances of the delay, and provide an oral debrief of the call, to be followed by the written documentation as soon as possible.

9. Report/documentation is to be minimal, limited to only that information necessary to record contacts made during the call. TAGS volunteers are to keep in mind that anything they write on a call may be subject to requests for production in criminal and/or civil legal proceedings.

Any press/media inquiries made to TAGS volunteers are to be directed to the designated Press Information Officer, Police Watch Commander or Fire Battalion Commander, as applicable.

911.8 PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

Communications between TAGS volunteers and department members are not recognized as privileged communications under the California Evidence Code. Therefore, TAGS volunteers may be compelled to testify in a legal proceeding. However, with the rare exception of legally mandated disclosure, TAGS volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality. A general principle for ensuring such confidentiality is to inform a person, prior to discussion, what the limitations and exceptions are regarding the information revealed. In those cases where a concern or a question regarding confidentiality arises, the TAGS volunteer must immediately contact the Program Coordinator for guidance.

The acceptance and success of the TAGS Program will be determined, in part, by observance of confidentiality. It is imperative that TAGS volunteers maintain strict confidentiality of all information learned about an individual within the guidelines of this program.

Guidelines include:

1. No person who provides TAGS services to members of the Departments may work or volunteer for the Departments in any capacity other than that of TAGS volunteer.

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2. No TAGS volunteer shall provide counsel to or receive confidential communications from any Department members concerning an incident personally witnessed by the TAGS volunteer or concerning an incident involving the TAGS volunteer.
3. Communication between a TAGS volunteer and any person is considered confidential except for matters which involve the following:
 - a. Danger to self.
 - b. Danger to others.
 - c. Suspected child abuse.
 - d. Domestic violence.
 - e. Elder abuse.
 - f. In cases where law requires divulgence.
 - g. Where divulgence is requested by the person who received services.

911.9 TRAINING

The Departments will establish a minimum number of training hours and standards for department TAGS volunteers. The training may include, but is not limited to:

- Stress management
- Death notifications
- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress
- Burnout for members of law enforcement and chaplains
- Legal liability and confidentiality
- Ethics
- Responding to crisis situations
- The law enforcement family
- Substance abuse
- Suicide
- Officer injury or death
- Sensitivity and diversity