



# ACTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P: Operations		
POLICY & PROCEDURE # 1.45	DATE OF ISSUE: 7/14/2023	EFFECTIVE DATE: 7/14/2023
SUBJECT: Clinical Staff Responder	ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief James Cogan	
REFERENCE(S): Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission: None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDS <input type="checkbox"/> RESCINDS	

## I. PURPOSE

- A. On January 10, 2022, the Acton Police Department implemented a new position of Clinical Staff Responder to support the ongoing work of the Jail Diversion Program. The foundation of this position brings a Master's level clinician into the Department full-time to help evaluate persons experiencing a mental health crisis in the field where they are located, and hopefully avoid unnecessary and costly hospitalizations and/or criminal involvement for minor offenses related to mental health needs, connecting them to the appropriate supports and services.

## II. POLICY

- A. The clinician will respond with officers to calls for service and assist when the officer believes their expertise will be useful. The clinician should be considered a member of the Department, and a part of our team. In addition to providing services to individuals in the community, the clinician serves as a resource to department members, providing training and education on a variety of mental health topics.
- B. The clinician can help in many different ways including but not limited to de-escalation, crisis intervention, suicide evaluations, well-being checks, in-custody evaluations, death notifications, support at large-scale events (fires, traumatic accident scenes, drownings, etc.), overdoses, and incidents involving or affecting children. If the need arises, the clinician can write a Section 12, and help assist in gathering information for a Section 35. The clinician also provides mental health support, referrals, and resources for calls received by the Communication Center for callers requesting mental health services.
- C. This program has been tried and has been highly successful in multiple communities. It works best when officers build a working relationship with the clinician, and the clinician is out on patrol with officers. Officers should call for

the clinician to respond to calls involving a person experiencing a mental health-related issue. It is the officer's responsibility to do their best to ensure the scene is safe for the clinician to enter. The clinician is also available for follow-up on less acute situations after the fact where mental health/ substance abuse is present and referrals may be needed.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Dispatching the Clinician**

The clinician can be dispatched to calls for service in a few different ways depending on the need:

1. Communication Center staff may advise the OIC of the potential need for a clinical response based on the nature of the call.
2. The OIC, upon assessment, may request the Communication Center dispatch the clinician during in-progress calls.
3. The clinician may contact the Communication Center while monitoring radio transmissions to consider the need for a clinical response as determined by the OIC.
4. Officers on scene may request a response from the clinician to provide on-scene services and resources.

#### **B. Responding to calls**

The clinician can arrive to calls either while riding with an officer, or if it is determined that the clinician will respond to a call already in progress, they will respond in a department-issued vehicle and notify the OIC upon arriving at the scene for further direction.

## **CLINICAL STAFF RESPONDER INFORMATION**

**History:** None