



Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board

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MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Act 101-652 requires the Board to establish statewide standards for minimum standards regarding regular mental health screenings for probationary and permanent police officers, ensuring that counseling sessions and screenings remain confidential. In response, the Board has approved the following recommendations:

- A. All law enforcement agencies should perform a psychological evaluation on newly hired recruit officers. This evaluation should contain a battery examination of several characteristics. This evaluation should focus on personality traits that support resiliency to the adverse environment that law enforcement responds to. Assessment protocols will focus on assessment tools to assess the overall resiliency of officers so as to take a proactive response to the psychological health of the law enforcement community. It is a well-documented reality that law enforcement are up to 4 times more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty. While there are many options that serve this purpose, agencies should conduct this examination to the extent of their available resources.
- B. Agencies should screen new recruit officers while they attend the basic academy, specifically at the beginning and end of their training. This screening should identify the general growth and development of the recruit. If concerns are raised as to the health of the recruit, more specific testing and education on officer resiliency is recommended. These screening tools are a natural process to the development of systems within law enforcement to reduce the negative impact of lateral trauma and chronic hypervigilance.
- C. Agencies should screen all officers at least once annually to evaluate the overall health of the agency. These annual screenings should be general and brief but allow for more detailed questions to be asked if certain metrics are displayed, such as a majority or substantial number of responses indicating the negative impact of lateral trauma, signs of depression/PTSD, or other negative outcomes related to the officer's career.
- D. Knowing the well documented negative impact of the stress of law enforcement are exposed to, instances where the overall health of the agency is a concern, programs, training, and in more intense situations; Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)/counselors or counseling options should be made available to the officers. All officers should be encouraged to attend sessions with a CISM/counselor and there should be no stigma, negative outcome, financial burden, socially, or professionally, for attending a counseling session.

- E. In the course of any mental health screening, confidentiality is to remain paramount. Responses to all screening questions shall remain anonymous/confidential when conducted internally by the employing agency. These screenings should not be used for any fitness or promotional matters. In the event that the screening of any single officer reveals items of serious concern, the agency may not attempt to ascertain the identity of the responding officer.

- F. Agencies should consider partnering with a third-party to conduct these screenings. Agencies should also consider partnering with a third-party vendor to provide overall follow up of trends that may be identified by the screening outcomes to improve officer wellness and wellness of the agency. The role of a third-party screening entity allows for greater confidentiality and trust, therefore increasing the likelihood of accurate and thorough responses.

The Board believes that these screening measures will better allow police agencies to understand the health of their new and experienced officers as they move through their career and will help identify trends and concerns that are present within an agency. These recommendations will also allow specific officer concerns to be identified and addressed by third-party screeners who can preserve the highest degree of confidentiality and assist officers to better serve their communities.

(Initial Draft – September 2021)