


STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
Police Officer Standards and Training Council
Connecticut Police Academy

GENERAL NOTICE 20-11

To: Chief Law Enforcement Officers
Training Officers
Protective Services
Resident Troopers

From: Karen Boisvert 
Academy Administrator

Date: November 23, 2020

Subject: Guidance Document regarding periodic mental health wellness checks pursuant to the Legislative July Special Session, Public Act No. 20 – 1 (House Bill No. 6004).

At the November 12, 2020 regular meeting, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council adopted written guidance language to assist Law Enforcement Units concerning periodic mental health wellness checks pursuant to the Legislative July Special Session, Public Act No. 20 – 1 (House Bill No. 6004).

The attached guidance document concerning periodic mental health wellness checks will provide:

- Section 1:** Scope
- Section 2:** Purpose
- Section 3:** Procedure
- Section 4:** Definitions
- Section 5:** Confidentiality

Questions or comments may be directed to my attention either by e-mail Karen.boisvert@ct.gov or phone 203 – 427 – 2601.

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Police Officer Standards and Training Council Guidance Policy
Mental Health Wellness Checks
In accordance with July Special Session, Public Act No. 20-1
Revised 3/2/2021

Section 1. Scope

The scope of this policy is in accordance with the provisions of (HB6004), the Police Officer Standards and Training Council, and in partnership with Connecticut's municipal and state law enforcement agencies, supporting initiatives aimed at maintaining and improving mental, physical and the spiritual health of Connecticut sworn law enforcement officers. This policy seeks to implement the aforementioned mandate while removing the stigma associated with treatment for the impacts of critical incidents, acutely stressful events, and adverse experiences associated with the duties of police officers. POSTC or (your Department) values its officers and has a vested interest in assisting officers in maintaining their health and wellness.

Section 2. Purpose

Periodic mental health wellness checks have existed for law enforcement officers for many years. In accordance with Section 16 of the Police Accountability Bill, (HB6004), it is recommended that a broad scope of officer wellness, not exclusive to PTSD be part of a mental health wellness check performed every (5) years of P.O.ST.C. certified law enforcement officers. While P.T.S.D. is a concern for law enforcement officers, prevalent data suggest that issues such as substance abuse, depression, family issues, and suicide are also impactful on an officer's life and are mental health concerns that need to be assessed in the wellness checks.

Section 3. Procedure

Every (5) years, and under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer or Chief of Police, of each respective department, shall ensure that sworn officers must participate in a mental health wellness check. Individual respective departments may determine the number of officers to participate in the wellness checks each year, ensuring that officers are screened every (5) years. (It is recommended that the departments cycle through their officers at a rate of 20% of their personnel each year, accomplishing a rolling (5) year cycle).

The mental health checks shall consist of an approximately 45 minute scheduled meeting that would explore an officers overall "mental health wellness". This assessment shall identify, if any, issues that may require further treatment and/or evaluation. If so appropriate referrals shall be made to relevant resources. These wellness checks shall be performed by a Board Certified Psychiatrist or Psychologist.

A final report prepared by the evaluator shall include information pertaining to an officer's attendance and participation in the wellness check, and shall be made available to both the Officer and the Chief of Police upon completion. These reports shall contain no clinical information, A.D.A requirements and confidentiality restrictions shall apply to these visits. It is essential that officers feel confident that the process is confidential and their well-being is of a paramount concern for the evaluation.

In the event that an evaluator determines that an officer is a danger to themselves or the public, a report will be immediately sent to the Chief of Police delineating those concerns. In those instances, the Chief of Police shall make a determination as to whether a comprehensive fitness for duty evaluation shall be performed and what measures will be taken to place the officer in a modified duty assignment. The subject of confidentiality limits are outweighed by a concern for a danger to one's self, a danger to others, elder and child abuse, involvement with criminal activity, or where information is divulged that would require a mandatory fitness for duty evaluation.

Section 4. Definitions

P.O.S.T.C. - Police Officer Standards and Training Council

P.T.S.D. - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Board Certified Psychologist/Psychiatrist - A licensed professional certified by the American Board of Psychology.

Section 5. Confidentiality

Mental health services are normally confidential, and the agency will not normally be notified if an employee seeks voluntary treatment beyond the scope of the mental health checks, but some exceptions to confidentiality exist. These exceptions include, but are not limited to expressions of an intent to hurt one's self, expression of an intent to hurt others, elder or child abuse, or involvement in criminal activity, or other information divulged that would require a fitness for duty evaluation.