I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines that shall be uniformly applied following any officer-involved shooting or an incident that has resulted in death or serious bodily injury in order to minimize the chances that involved officers will develop or suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and to ensure the integrity of the investigation of the incident. It is recognized that in such situations the highest priority is to provide medical attention to the injured.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the University of Rhode Island Police Department to have officer-involved shooting incidents or fatal police incidents investigated with the utmost thoroughness, professionalism, and impartiality to determine if officer actions conform with the law and the department’s Use of Force policy. The department recognizes that involved officers as well as their families may experience acute stress and traumatic reactions after an incident. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this agency to take immediate action after such incidents to safeguard the continued good mental health of all involved personnel.
III. DEFINITIONS

1. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: An anxiety disorder that can result from exposure to short-term severe stress or the long-term buildup of repetitive and prolonged milder stress.

2. Officer-Involved Shooting Incident: A line-of-duty incident where shooting causes serious bodily injury or death to an officer or other person.

3. Police Shooting Incident: For the purpose of this policy, a police shooting incident is the intentional or unintentional discharging of a firearm by a law enforcement officer. Unless the shooting results in injury or death to a person, discharging a firearm during the following situations will not be considered a police shooting incident:
   - Authorized firearm training.
   - Authorized firearm qualifications.
   - Authorized firearm competitions.
   - The authorized killing of a dangerous animal or an animal so badly injured or ill that humaneness dictates it be removed from further suffering.

4. Fatal Police Incident: An incident in which an officer causes the death of another person as a result of official police action, e.g. pursuit, use-of-force incident, or a motor vehicle accident—death resulting.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Handling of Officers at the Scene of Shooting/Fatal Incident

1. A supervisor shall be dispatched to the scene of the incident and shall assume primary responsibility in caring for involved personnel. Emergency medical personnel will be dispatched to the scene as soon as it is safe to do so. The supervisor will assign police personnel to attend to the injured until the arrival of emergency medical personnel.

2. The supervisor will ensure that all notifications to Public Safety Command (Director and Major) have been made, as well as all required notifications contained in the University’s Emergency Call Procedure.

3. During any period when the involved officer is required to remain on the scene but has no immediate duties to fulfill, the officer should be taken to a quiet area away from the immediate location of the incident. A peer support officer or other support personnel should remain with the officer(s), but should be advised not to discuss details of the incident.
a. The first supervisor on the scene may require the officer, if possible, to give a brief summary of the occurrence to assist the agency in securing the scene and investigating the incident.

b. The officer(s) should be advised that they may seek legal counsel.

c. The supervisor should consider obtaining information from other officers who were at the scene and witnessed the incident but were not involved in the actual shooting.

d. The officers should be advised not to discuss the incident with anyone except personal or agency attorney, union representative, or departmental investigator until the conclusion of the preliminary investigation.

e. Involved officers should not be allowed to drive themselves from the scene, but instead should be conveyed from the scene by another officer.

4. Where possible, the supervisor shall briefly meet with the involved officers:

a. No stimulants, including caffeine or depressants, should be given to the officers until they have been examined by medical personnel.

b. Only minimal, preliminary questions should be asked about the incident. The officers should be advised that a more detailed debriefing will be conducted at a later time.

5. Any standard investigations that occur concerning the incident should be discussed with the officers.

6. The supervisor should arrange for all officers directly involved in the incident to leave the scene as soon as possible and be taken to a quiet, secure setting. Supervisors should consider promptly transporting involved officer(s) from the scene to the hospital after they have provided the basic on-scene information. This provides a safe refuge for the officer(s) and ensures they will have a medical checkup before going home or providing a statement. A physical exam may also help detect unnoticed injuries or other health problems associated with stress.

a. Multiple officers involved in a fatal police incident should not be transported from the scene in the same vehicle.

b. Upon being released from the hospital or when it is determined that the involved officer(s) will not be transported to the hospital for a physical exam, the involved officer(s) should be removed from the scene and transported to the police station as soon as practical:

i. The involved officer(s) should be taken to an office that provides a quiet, private setting.
ii. Officers should not be taken to the front office or offices where the public and other employees, including police officers, have access to the involved officer(s).

iii. When there are multiple officers involved in a fatal police incident, they should be taken to separate offices with appropriate support personnel assigned.

7. Involved officers should not be left alone in an office. A supervisor should ensure that support personnel, i.e. Peer Support Officer, an officer that has been involved in a similar incident in the past, or an uninvolved officer who is familiar with the officer and the officer’s family, are assigned to remain with the officer until command staff determines the next course of action. Involved officer(s) and those officers assigned to remain with the officer should not discuss the facts surrounding the fatal incident. However, involved officers should be encouraged to discuss their feelings, any investigative protocols, assignments, etc.

8. It is recognized that under most circumstances the taking of the officer’s duty weapon will be required for investigative purposes and laboratory analysis. This action could have an emotional impact on the officer. When the duty weapon is taken, the supervisor shall:

a. Take custody of the officer’s weapon in a discreet manner.

b. Supervisors should consider seizing the weapon within the command post or an area away from other officers, the public, or media if the circumstances require seizing the weapon at the scene.

9. The supervisor shall handle the officer and all involved personnel with respect and compassion while ensuring all criminal and administrative needs are met, given the stress, anxiety and other physical and emotional conditions.

V. POST-INCIDENT PROCEDURES

A. Involved officers should notify their families about the incident as soon as possible. Where an involved officer is injured and/or unable to do so, family members shall be notified as soon as practical.

1. Notification should be made in person by a supervisor and officer acquainted with the involved officer’s family. The supervisor shall arrange for transportation to the hospital where necessary.

2. The identity of the involved officer(s) shall be provided to family members prior to any names being released to the media.
3. Family members shall be provided with a name and telephone number of a person in the department who they may contact at any time to receive up-to-date information regarding the status of the involved officer(s).

B. Involved officer(s) should not be permitted to drive themselves home once they are released by the investigating agencies. The effects of post-traumatic stress can interfere with an officer’s judgment and physical skills necessary to operate a motor vehicle, even when the officer does not demonstrate any symptoms of stress. If the involved officer’s family has been notified of the incident, then any officer can be assigned to drive the involved officer home. It would be preferable that an officer who is familiar with the involved officer’s family conduct the transport. If the family of the involved officer has not been notified of the incident, then a supervisor will be assigned by the Director or Major to take the officer home. It is expected that the family of the officer involved in the incident will have questions regarding the incident and what to expect in the near future. It should be a supervisor who discusses this with the family.

C. Involved officers shall be removed from line duties pending evaluation but shall remain available for any necessary administrative investigations.

1. Involved officers shall be assigned to administrative leave/duties (non-enforcement) within the police department until the completion of the investigation conducted jointly by the Rhode Island State Police, the Rhode Island Department of Attorney General, and the University of Rhode Island Police per the protocols established by the Attorney General. The Attorney General will determine whether or not the investigation will be submitted to a Grand Jury for determination of criminal violations. Officers may return to duty prior to Grand Jury presentation at the discretion of the Director of Public Safety after conferring with the Department of Attorney General. In cases in which the Attorney General’s protocols do not apply, the officer may be returned to duty by the Director after consultation with the internal investigators assigned to the Professional Standards and Training Unit.

D. All officers directly involved in the shooting incident shall be required to contact a mental health practitioner for counseling and evaluation as soon as practical after the incident.

1. The specialist used for counseling and evaluation shall be a trained and licensed mental health professional who is experienced in PTSD and the law enforcement culture as well as in providing post-shooting interventions.

2. The department should notify the mental health professional as soon as possible and facilitate a post-shooting intervention by the mental health professional. The department’s Behavioral Intervention Team member will help to identify competent mental health professionals who could be utilized in these circumstances.

3. After the counseling sessions, the specialist shall advise the agency:
a. Whether it would be in the officer’s best interest to be placed on administrative leave or administrative duties, and for how long;

b. At what point a removed duty weapon should be returned to the officer;

c. On determination of the best continued course of counseling.

E. Involved support personnel should also be encouraged to contact mental health specialists after a shooting/critical incident.

F. The department strongly encourages the families of the involved officers to take advantage of available counseling services.

G. Any agency investigation of the incident shall be conducted as soon and as quickly as practical.

H. The URI Police Department should brief all other department members concerning the incident so that rumors are kept to a minimum. Department members are encouraged to show the involved officer(s) their support and concern.

I. All personnel involved in a shooting incident should be advised that they are not permitted to speak with the media regarding the incident. Officers shall refer all inquiries from the media to the Director of Public Safety unless otherwise authorized to release a statement pertaining to the incident.

J. In order to protect against crank and/or abusive calls, involved officers should be advised to have phone calls answered by another person, if at all, for several days once their names are released to the public.

K. Officers directly involved in the shooting incident may be required to requalify with their weapon prior to returning to full duty. It is recognized that when an officer discharges their firearm in the line of duty, there is a psychological impact. The review of the investigation as well as reports from mental health professionals will be used in determining what level of firearms retraining/requalification will be required.

L. Officers may be assigned to a Field Training Officer (FTO) or supervisor upon returning to duty to ensure a smooth acclimation back to full duty.

1. As post-traumatic stress disorders may not arise immediately, or the officers may deny or attempt to hide the problem, each supervisor is responsible for monitoring the conduct of the officers assigned to their shift or unit for unusual or uncharacteristic behavior. A supervisor will prepare a report to the Director of Public Safety identifying any symptoms that they have observed that could indicate that stress may be disrupting the officer’s job performance.

VI. INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES
A. When a University of Rhode Island police officer is involved in a shooting incident in which an individual is injured or killed or has employed deadly force, the Rhode Island Department of Attorney General must be contacted immediately. This will initiate their investigative protocols. An investigative team will be formed, which will consist of a representative from the Attorney General’s Office, an investigator from the Rhode Island State Police, and an officer from the University of Rhode Island Police Department. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Attorney General will determine if the case will be presented to a Grand Jury.

B. Whenever there is a police shooting incident that does not meet the requirements to activate the Attorney General’s protocols, the Director of Public Safety will authorize a Shooting Review Team to be activated.

1. Composition of the Shooting Review Team

   a. The Shooting Review Team will consist of members of the department’s Professional Standards and Training Unit and include at least one department firearms instructor. If deemed necessary, the investigators from the Professional Standards and Training Unit may request that additional personnel be assigned to assist in the investigation. This request will be made to the Director or Major who will evaluate the request and determine if additional officer(s) will be added to the team.

   b. Any officer who was an active participant in the incident under investigation may not be considered for inclusion on the Shooting Review Team.

   c. In the event that members of the Professional Standards Unit or the department detective are not available to serve on the Shooting Review Team, the University Police Major may appoint additional members to the team.

2. Duties of the Shooting Review Team

   a. The purpose of the Shooting Review Team is to determine if the discharge of the officer’s firearm was consistent with department policy and training. It is a non-criminal review; however, like all investigations, any evidence of criminal conduct will be investigated.

   b. If the Shooting Review Team is activated by the Director of Public Safety while the scene is still active, team members will report to the scene.

   c. At the scene, the team will meet with the ranking URI police officer for a briefing.

   d. If appropriate and if not already done by the initial responding supervisor, the firearms instructor/range officer assigned to the Shooting Review Team will, at a safe and appropriate location, take custody of the involved officer’s firearm. The range officer will thoroughly note the condition of the
weapon(s) involved, and render it/them safe. Replacement weapons will be assigned to officers as soon as practical.

e. The ranking officer of the Shooting Review Team will be responsible for making assignments to team members. Additionally, they will schedule team meetings to review the progress of the investigation. During these meetings the team will;

- Review all available reports, documents, statements, and other facts relevant to the investigation.
- Review department policies, rules, regulations, and training pertaining to the incident investigated.

f. The ranking officer of the Shooting Review Team will be responsible for keeping the Director and Major updated on the progress of the investigation. A final report will be submitted; it will contain the results of the investigation and any recommendation the team has for the Director. The final report will contain the names and signatures of all team members.

g. In the event that an on-duty officer is involved in a police shooting incident outside of the jurisdiction of the University of Rhode Island, the Director may authorize a Shooting Review Team to conduct an internal investigation. A member of the Professional Standards and Training Unit will be designated as the URI contact for the agencies conducting the investigation of a URI officer-involved shooting that takes place off campus.

By order of:

[Signature]

Stephen Baker-Director of Public Safety