



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 923 – Return to Duty (RTD) Program

Office with Primary Responsibility:	CTA	Effective Date:	October 05, 2020
		Prior Revision Date:	July 31, 2010
Office(s) with Secondary Responsibilities:	COP, PSC, PNC, TSC, FTC, IDC, SSO	Number of Pages:	5
Forms Referenced in Procedure:	SAPD Form #37-DER SAPD Form #37-WER	Related Procedures:	325, 904, 908, 921

.01 INTRODUCTION

The Return to Duty (RTD) Program establishes the processes necessary to ensure officers receive prompt, effective, and adequate services and support as needed to return to duty. This support is available whenever officers are involved in a serious incident or are absent from the Department for an extended period of time.

.02 POLICY

- A. Officers who sustain a serious traumatic injury, or who witness a violent, traumatic incident involving death or serious bodily injury, whether on or off duty, or who have been away from the Department more than one hundred and eighty (180) consecutive calendar days, may be placed into the RTD Program. Additionally, any officer may be placed into this program at the direction of the Chief of Police.
- B. Officers who have sustained a serious traumatic injury, whether on or off duty, will receive both medical and psychological services throughout the stages of their recovery.

.03 DISCUSSION

- A. The San Antonio Police Department recognizes the importance of the physical, mental, and emotional health of its officers. It also recognizes the many stresses placed on officers and their families when officers are seriously injured or have been away from the Department and not performing police functions for long periods of time. To help decrease the impact of excessive stress, the Department has a Psychological Services Office prepared to support the psychological needs of its officers and their families through evaluation, counseling, and consultation in accordance with GM Procedure 921, *Psychological Services*.
- B. With numerous changes in laws, Department policies and procedures, changes in technology, tactics, and possible loss of driving and firearms skills, the RTD Program is designed to assist the officer's re-introduction into being a fully functional member of the Department.
- C. The RTD Program provides the officer and his family supportive counseling services, if necessary, to help the officer and his family cope and recover from any serious injuries or trauma.
- D. The RTD Program provides training assessment and field work through the Field Training Officer (FTO) Program, designed to assist officers with returning to their assigned duties.
- E. The RTD Program is designed to satisfy the community's expectation that the officers have been properly cared for and are capable of returning to their duties as police officers.
- F. The RTD Program process will ensure the highest degree of continuity and standardization in the reorientation of officers who have missed time from work due to:
 - 1. A serious traumatic injury (whether on or off duty);
 - 2. A serious bodily injury (whether on or off duty);



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3. Witnessing a violent, traumatic incident involving death or serious bodily injury;
4. Sick leave in excess of one hundred and eighty (180) consecutive calendar days;
5. Military leave in excess of one hundred and eighty (180) consecutive calendar days;
6. Any other circumstances where the officer has missed more than one hundred and eighty (180) consecutive calendar days; or
7. At the discretion of the Chief of Police.

.04 TERMINOLOGY (For specific use within this procedure, see Glossary)

Consultation Evaluation	Counseling Serious Bodily Injury	Critical Incident Stress Serious Traumatic Injury
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.05 RETURN TO DUTY (RTD) PROGRAM

- A. The Return to Duty Program shall be coordinated by the Office of the Chief in conjunction with the FTO Program and the Psychological Services Office.
- B. Within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving any notification that an officer has missed time from work due to events outlined in Section .03.F.(1-6), the officer's Division Commander shall route all documentation pertaining to the officer/event to the RTD Program Coordinator in the Office of the Chief.
- C. The officer's Division Commander, in conjunction with the RTD Program Coordinator, the Psychological Services Office, and the Chief of Police, shall review the documentation on the officer and determine if the officer is placed into the RTD Program.
- D. The Chief of Police will make the final decision on whether an officer is placed into the RTD Program.
- E. Officers placed into the RTD Program shall receive mandatory evaluations as outlined in GM Procedure 921, *Psychological Services*.
- F. The Coordinator of the RTD Program, with consultation from the Psychological Services Office, will make recommendations to the Chief of Police regarding limited duty assignments for officers in the RTD Program.
- G. While an officer is physically recovering from his injuries, the Psychological Services Office will offer supportive counseling services to include individual and/or family counseling as well as providing peer group support.
- H. The Psychological Services Office shall conduct counseling services with the officer, as needed, based on the nature and severity of the serious traumatic and/or serious bodily injury sustained.
 1. Psychological counseling services may also be conducted with the officer's family members who choose to receive the counseling.
 2. Psychological counseling services may include, but are not limited to, counseling for stress, critical incident stress, officer evaluations, and other counseling services as outlined in GM Procedure 921.
- I. After an officer is cleared medically to return to duty, the FTO Program Coordinator shall implement a plan designed to assist officers with returning to their police duties.



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1. An individual training program shall be established for each officer based on the reason for the officer's entry into the RTD Program. The training will be customized for each officer and will consider such things as length of time away from the job, the nature, extent, and seriousness of any traumatic and/or bodily injury sustained, and their duty assignment.
 2. The first stage of training will be conducted at the Training Academy and may include, but not be limited to, Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedures, Department policies and procedures, physical training, tactics, firearms proficiency, and driving.
 - a. Training Academy Instructors shall document in writing all training provided to the officer, including whether the officer passed or failed the curriculum.
 - b. The FTO Program Coordinator shall review all documentation provided by Training Academy Instructors in determining an officer's fitness to return to police duties.
 3. The second stage of training shall consist of working in the field with an FTO.
 - a. During the first week of "Field Work" with an FTO, the officer will be at his assigned station and shift. The FTO will complete SAPD Form #37-DER, *Daily Evaluation Report*, each day the officer rides with the FTO.
 - b. At the end of the first week of "Field Work," the FTO will complete SAPD Form #37-WER, *Weekly Evaluation Report*, documenting whether the officer requires additional training or if the officer should be returned to his regular duty.
- J. Officers not assigned to Patrol Divisions who have successfully completed the first stage of training:
1. Will be assigned to their previous units under the direction of their immediate supervisor for at least one week of evaluation.
 2. The immediate supervisor will then make a written recommendation to the Return to Duty Program Coordinator, recommending whether the officer should return to full police duty status or if the officer requires additional training.
- K. Upon an officer completing the RTD Program:
1. The FTO Program Coordinator and/or Return to Duty Coordinator shall review all documentation provided by the FTO or unit supervisor in determining an officer's fitness to return to police duties.
 2. The FTO Program Coordinator will complete a report documenting whether the officer requires additional training or if the officer should be returned to his police duties. The FTO Program Coordinator will then route the report, including all training documentation, to the Psychological Services Office.
 3. The Psychological Services Office shall review all documentation received from the FTO Program Coordinator and/or Return to Duty Program Coordinator and document whether the officer requires additional services or if the officer should be returned to his police duties. The Psychological Services Office will route all documentation, training assessments, and psychological services recommendation to the Chief of Police.
- L. Upon review of all documentation, the Chief of Police has the following options regarding the officer's status in the Program:
1. Return to full duty, (In accordance with GM Procedure 904, *Limited Duty Assignments*)



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2. Additional training,
3. Additional counseling,
4. Removal from Department. (In accordance with Rules and Regulations and the Collective Bargaining Agreement)

.06 RTD PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Office of the Chief

1. The Chief of Police may order an officer to undergo psychological evaluation or treatment. The Chief of Police will be furnished with a report from the health care professional to whom the officer was referred.
2. Makes the final determination on officer's placement in and release from the RTD Program.

B. Return to Duty (RTD) Program Coordinator

1. Coordinates and tracks the RTD Program.
2. Maintains all documentation pertaining to an officer's participation in the RTD Program

C. Training Academy Staff

1. The Training Academy Commander shall schedule Academy instructors to instruct officers placed into the RTD Program.
2. Training Academy Instructors shall train officers placed in the RTD program. Additionally, they will make recommendations to the FTO Program Coordinator on an officer's ability to return to police duties.

D. Field Training Officer (FTO) Program Coordinator

1. In conjunction with the Psychological Services Office, shall establish individualized curriculum guidelines for those officers required to participate in the RTD Program.
2. Conducts evaluations of officers in the RTD Program, and make recommendations to the Chief of Police on an officer's ability to return to police duties.
3. Maintains copies of documented training and evaluations conducted by Training Academy Staff and FTO's.

E. Field Training Officers (FTO)

1. Retrains and evaluates officers who are placed into the RTD Program.
2. Makes recommendations to the FTO Program Coordinator regarding an officer's ability to return to full police duties.

F. Psychological Services Office

1. Provides psychological evaluations to officers who are placed into the RTD Program. Psychological services may also be conducted in conformance with GM Procedure 921.



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2. All voluntary and non-mandatory evaluations and counseling are confidential information, unless the staff psychologist determines an immediate threat exists to a member or other party (in such cases, the staff psychologist has a duty to intervene to save lives), or if required by law or subpoenaed by a Judge's order.

G. Officers and Family Members

1. Officers and immediate family members may request voluntary psychological services by contacting the Department's Psychological Services Office at 207-2180.
2. Officers may make appointments for voluntary evaluations by calling the Psychological Services Office at 207-2180.