



Kern County Sheriff's Office

Policies and Procedures

TITLE: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM		NO: J-300	
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
EFFECTIVE: August 1, 1990	REVIEWED: 06/01/2018	REVISED: 04/01/1996	UPDATED: 06/01/2018

POLICY

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been established as a tool for self help by an employee and as a means for the Sheriff's Office to retain valued employees. The intent of the program is to help, not punish employees.

All records and discussions of personal problems with the EAP staff will be handled in a confidential manner as are other medical records. These records are kept by the EAP office and do not become a part of the employee's personnel file. Since the program is confidential, participation in the program will not jeopardize job security, promotional opportunities and reputations.

The EAP provides consultants with whom an employee can discuss problems and who can then refer the employee to the resource(s) that can better aid the employee in resolving the problem.

The cost of the consultation with the EAP provider is covered by the County. The cost of any referrals will be the responsibility of the employee, but may be covered by health insurance.

If an employee recognizes a need for professional counseling for himself/herself or a member of his/her immediate family, he/she may directly contact the program provider. This type of referral is confidential and the Sheriff's Office will not be notified.

If a member of the Sheriff's Office recognizes that a friend in the Sheriff's Office is having a problem, that member is encouraged to remind their friend of the availability of EAP and encourage them to utilize it. This type of referral will be considered a self referral regardless of the rank of the employees involved.

All supervisory referrals shall be based strictly on job performance. The supervisory referral is designed to aid the supervisor in retaining an employee who has performed well in the past, but whose performance had declined.

When a supervisor recognizes a decline in an employee's performance, he/she should utilize the traditional approach of counseling the employee about the decrease in performance. If this does not bring the performance back to standard, the supervisor should then consider the possible benefits of the EAP.

If traditional supervisory counseling methods prove ineffective and the supervisor feels that the EAP may be of assistance, the supervisor should contact his/her immediate superiors and in consultation with them will decide if a supervisory referral is a viable option to help the employee bring job performance up to standard. Only the Commander of the division or higher

rank can authorize such supervisory referral. If such referral is authorized, the supervisor should contact the EAP provider and furnish him/her with the EAP “supervisory referral” form. The supervisor should supply the EAP provider with specifics regarding the decline in the employee’s performance and what steps have been taken to improve the performance. If a referral is deemed appropriate, the supervisor shall document only the performance and not speculate as to any personal problems. The supervisor will then have an additional interview with the employee and strongly suggest that the employee contact the EAP provider.

The EAP provider will notify the supervisor if the employee makes and keeps the appointment and follows the recommendations of the counselor, but will not release any other information without the employee’s written authorization, unless ethically or legally required to do so.

The EAP is not mandatory and a supervisor cannot order an employee to make an appointment. No action can be taken against an employee for refusing to utilize the program. Job performance is what the supervisor is evaluating and the supervisor may include the fact that the EAP was offered and refused.

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