# Chapter 49 Stress in Policing

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# Abstract

This chapter begins with a discussion of the scope of the stress problem with police officers. Three categories of police stress—critical incidents, secondary traumatic stress (STS), and organizational stress are discussed next. Critical incident stress refers to events where police officers experience a threat to their safety. STS, also known as vicarious traumatization, cumulative career stress, and operational stress injury, stems from the exposure to the suffering of others. Lastly, the most impactful source of stress, organizational stress, includes workplace hassles such as shiftwork and paperwork. The impact of stress on the psychological, physiological, behavioral, and spiritual health of police officers is also discussed. A discussion of the impact on police families follows. The chapter concludes with a brief treatise of initiatives for preventing or mediating the impact of stress on police.