§ 214-j. Critical incident policy. 1. As used in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Critical incident" shall mean the following actions when performed by a member or experienced by a member in the course of official duties: (i) an action that directly causes serious physical injury or death to another person or member; (ii) a discharge of a firearm by a member directed at another person; (iii) a traffic accident or incident involving a division vehicle, aircraft, or vessel that results in serious physical injury or death; or (iv) any other incident deemed appropriate by the superintendent or their designee.

(b) "Serious physical injury" shall mean an injury that, based on the facts and circumstances reasonably known at the time of the incident, appears to involve a substantial risk of death or an obvious and severe impairment of a major bodily function, such that a reasonable person would conclude the injury is life-threatening or significantly life-altering, without regard to later medical findings, prognosis, or outcome. The determination of a "serious physical injury" shall be made by the superintendent or their designee based on the observable conditions and available information at the time the supervisor arrives at the scene of the critical incident, and shall not be affected by subsequent medical evaluation or recovery. "Serious physical injury" shall include, but not be limited to, suspected spinal cord injury or paralysis, severe penetrating head injury, massive blood loss, or loss of limb.

(c) "Directly involved" shall mean any member who was physically present within the immediate proximity of a critical incident at the time it occurred and whose direct exposure to the incident placed the member within the immediate zone of operational engagement, regardless of whether the member discharged a weapon or otherwise used force.

(d) "Primary member" means any directly involved member who justifiably used deadly physical force during the critical incident, or whose actions during the critical incident appear to be the most immediate and substantial cause of death or serious physical injury to a person.

2. The superintendent shall develop, maintain, and disseminate to all members of the division of state police a critical incident paid leave

policy that provides for paid critical incident leave in accordance with this section.

3. Such critical incident paid leave policy shall guarantee: (a) paid critical incident leave of at least twenty calendar days for any primary member whose official actions were the direct and proximate cause of the death of another person; (b) paid critical incident leave of at least ten calendar days for any other member directly involved in the critical incident; and (c) paid critical incident leave under such other circumstances the superintendent or their designee determines appropriate. Such leave shall constitute a separate category of leave and shall not count against vacation, sick, or personal leave accruals. Such leave, where appropriate, shall be designated as family and medical leave act and/or count against a member's workers' compensation leave entitlement.

4. Critical incident paid leave shall begin as soon as possible after the critical incident, provided that initial supervisory inquiries of the involved members shall occur before leave commences. Critical incident leave may only be delayed to ensure minimum necessary staffing levels or protect community safety. Delays shall only be as long as necessary to address such concerns. Upon agreement of the member and the superintendent or their designee, the member shall be allowed to return to duty prior to the completion of the period of critical incident leave.

5. In any case where critical incident paid leave has been made to a member, and it is thereafter determined that a critical incident did not occur or that the member's actions that resulted in the serious physical injury or death of another person were not justified, the superintendent or their designee may order the deduction of equivalent vacation or personal leave days and/or the withholding of future paid leave to such member, provided that the amount of days deducted and/or withheld shall not be more than the critical incident paid leave days that were originally provided.

6. The superintendent shall be prohibited from taking any punitive

administrative action against any member granted critical incident leave under this section solely on the basis of the provision of such leave unless the leave was provided, at least in part, based upon the member's fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

7. The superintendent is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to implement, administer, and enforce the provisions of this section.