**Purpose:**

*Okolona FD has, in cooperation with the YMCA/Center for Youth Alternatives designated all of our stations as a “Safe Place” where youth can turn for help. This program is designed for youth ages 12 to 17. All stations will display the familiar yellow and black diamond shaped signs with the words “Safe Place” clearly visible. This SOP will tell how to handle a request of our facilities as a Safe Place and the procedure to be followed to ensure safety of our personnel and the youth in need of a safe place.*

**Procedure:**

**Signage**

1. Signs available from Safe Place shall be mounted to exterior of buildings facing the roadway of stations, in a location that when viewed from the street clearly identifies our station as a “Safe Place” location.

2. Decals from Safe Place with “If closed” information will be placed at front entrance doors to stations in a location that is easy seen from entrance doors.

**Initial Personnel Training:**

1. Each member shall complete initial training from either Safe Place personnel or from a representative of the OFD Training Bureau. This will include support and staff personnel. New employees (full and part time) shall receive Safe Place training as part of the initial orientation.  New volunteer members shall receive Safe Place training as part of the recruit training program.

**Procedure:**

1. Upon entry of a youth, our personnel, if alone, should contact a second member in the station. Two members shall be present at all times and should remain with youth until Safe Place Volunteer’s arrive. The officer in charge of the station shall be contacted, who will then notify the Shift Chief or Duty Officer.

2. If ensuring two members are present with the youth result in a company being unavailable to respond to a call for service, MetroSafe shall be notified to change the unit’s status to “Not Recommendable”.

3. Personnel shall assess the youth for emergency medical needs or crimes committed against the youth. If medical needs exist, EMS response shall be requested. If the youth is a crime victim, police response shall be requested. Youth only seeking shelter that are not injured or believed to have had crimes committed against them, should be referred to “YMCA Safe Place” and there is no need for police or medical response.

4. Youth younger than age 12 shall not be accepted into Safe Place and police response shall be requested.

5. The youth should be taken to a quiet and safe area of the station away from any room of public travel and where the youth will have some expectation of privacy. Avoid Lobbies and Training Rooms. Radio room, kitchens or offices are recommended. Youth shall not be taken into dormitory areas.

6. The officer in charge shall contact MetroSafe via telephone to notify the Safe Place request and to initiate a run number. The following information shall be obtained:

1. Name, Age, Gender of youth.
2. Home address of youth.
3. The station receiving the youth.
4. The time the youth arrived.
5. Name of Okolona members present.
6. Name of Shelter Staff volunteer’s name and ID used to verify.
7. Where the youth was being taken.
8. The time the youth departed the fire station.
9. Whether police were called due to the youth being a crime victim.
10. Whether there was a medical need and if so, the number of the EMS unit.

7. The officer in charge, once information of youth is gathered, shall call YMCA Safe House at 635-5233 and relay information on youth. YMCA Shelter House will provide the name of the volunteer and an estimate of time required for them to arrive.

8. It is to be remembered that the Safe Place Program is voluntary to the youth. Should the youth decide to leave, OFD Personnel should not prevent the youth from leaving, but try to explain to the youth his or her need for shelter and help the youth determine what is in the best interest of the youth. At no time should an OFD personnel place their hands on a youth or in any way attempt to restrain a youth from leaving.

9. On arrival of a Safe Place volunteer, their credentials shall be verified.

10. When the Safe Place volunteer has taken charge of the youth and the fire station is no longer involved, MetroSafe shall be notified so the incident can be completed in CAD and the Unit status can be changed to Available.

11. Notification of the Shift Chief or Duty Officer should also occur on conclusion of the shelter event and the report completed in the FireHouse Software with information placed in the notes section of the report.