

Milwaukee Area Investigative Team (MAIT) FAQs

What is the Milwaukee Area Investigation Team (MAIT)?

- The Milwaukee Area Investigation Team (MAIT) is a unit of dedicated law enforcement supervisors, investigators, and detectives from law enforcement agencies in Milwaukee County, the City of Waukesha, and the City of Brookfield. Investigators can call upon specialty units from the Wisconsin Regional Crime Lab to help process crime scenes or from the Wisconsin State Patrol to help document crash scenes.

Why is a MAIT type of team needed?

- In 2013 WI Act 348 enacted Wisconsin State law, WI §175.47, to take effect in April of 2014, which requires an independent law enforcement agency to investigate an incident at another law enforcement agency, if the involved agency had an event where the death of an individual results directly from an action or an omission of a law enforcement officer.
- As is typical in these critical situations, the amount of personnel and other resources used to investigate an officer involved critical incident lends itself to the use of outside resources or the pooling of resources. This team exists to investigate critical incidents in Milwaukee County and parts of Waukesha County, while ensuring investigators are following law enforcement best practices and ensuring public trust by conducting accurate, objective, transparent, timely, and professional multijurisdictional investigations of major incidents, which are primarily officer involved critical incidents.

Why was MAIT Formed?

- As previously noted, in 2013 WI Act 348 required WI law enforcement agencies have an outside agency investigate these incidents. MAIT doesn't just meet this requirement, it goes above and beyond this requirement. MAIT has a well-trained and well-equipped team of over 150 investigators and supervisors from multiple agencies. This allows MAIT members to be available at a moment's notice, 24/7/365.
- We strive to share the latest technological equipment and investigative techniques and to consolidate and share the skills of the most experienced supervisors and investigators.

When was MAIT formed?

- The idea was brought forward in 2015 by a Lieutenant from the Milwaukee Police Department. This was part of the Lieutenant's project, which was a requirement of graduation from a police leadership program, called the Wisconsin Command College.

Ultimately this concept was brought forward to the Milwaukee County Chief's, which became codified and implemented starting in June of 2016. The reason was to comply with WI §175.47, which requires an investigation conducted by at least two investigators, one of whom is the lead investigator and neither of whom is employed by a law enforcement agency that employs a law enforcement officer involved in the officer-involved death.

- In the beginning, the team was called the Milwaukee County Investigative Team. Law enforcement agencies in surrounding counties became aware of the thorough, transparent, and competent investigations and wanted to be part of the team. The City of Waukesha and the City of Brookfield soon became team members and lead investigative agencies. The team has investigated well over 70 critical incidents since inception. Many other law enforcement agencies across the US, have looked to the MAIT team, to develop their own critical incident investigative teams.

Who is a part of MAIT?

- All the law enforcement agencies in Milwaukee County are a part of MAIT and have been since June of 2016. In 2019 the City of Waukesha joined, and in 2022 the City of Brookfield joined MAIT.

Where does the MAIT team investigate?

- The MAIT Team will investigate a critical incident anywhere in Milwaukee County, the City of Waukesha, or the City of Brookfield. In cases where a Milwaukee County law enforcement officer, City of Waukesha or City of Brookfield officer is involved in a critical incident outside these jurisdictional boundaries, the team may or may not respond. This is dependent on the incident and the involvement of a MAIT member officer. Often, the Wisconsin Department of Criminal Investigation investigates most other officer involved incidents throughout the State.

What is a 'Lead MAIT agency'?

- The Lead agencies are select agencies which have the capacity to take on the size and complexity of officer involved critical incidents. The lead agencies are supplemented by the many other law enforcement investigators from the MAIT member agencies. The lead agency has overall responsibility of the investigation and often calls upon these other investigators from other departments, to use as an investigations multiplier to help investigate.

Who are the Lead MAIT agencies?

- City of Brookfield PD, City of Greenfield PD, City of Milwaukee PD, City of Oak Creek PD, City of Waukesha PD, City of Wauwatosa PD, and City of West Allis PD.

How do the Lead MAIT agencies rotate through who is responsible for leading the investigation?

- There are currently seven 'lead agencies' who will lead the investigation if there is a need for it. They are rotated after each incident, or 30-days, whichever comes first. There is always a 'primary' and 'secondary' lead agency that are on call each month. This is in case the primary lead agency is involved in an incident, then the secondary lead agency is ready to lead the investigation.

How is MAIT called to an incident?

- If an incident occurs which meets WI §175.47 to a MAIT agency, that agency contacts the MAIT supervisor. The MAIT supervisor calls upon the 'on-call' Lead Agency at that time, to conduct the investigation into this incident. The other uninvolved MAIT personnel from the uninvolved agencies respond to assist the Lead Agency with the investigation. There are over 150 MAIT members who are either investigators, detectives or supervisors. It should be noted that MAIT does not respond to incidents that do not involve MAIT agencies.

What does MAIT investigate?

- The MAIT team may investigate the following incidents:
 - Officer involved, duty related applications of deadly force which result in death or injury which may result in the death of a subject.
 - Death, or injury which may result in death, to a subject while in police custody, detention, or control.
 - Officer initiated actions or omissions in which death, or injury which may result in death, including traffic accidents directly resulting from police pursuits.
 - Any other officer involved critical incident that involves suspected criminal action that results in death or injury which may result in death; including but not limited to off duty or non-duty related incidents.
 - In instances where the severity of the injury to the subject resulting from the officer involved action is uncertain.
 - An executive (Chief, Sheriff or their designee) of a law enforcement agency belonging to MAIT can request resources when an incident overwhelms their investigative capacity (i.e. active shooter incident).

What happens in a MAIT investigation?

- A MAIT investigation is a criminal investigation into the incident. The investigation is just like any other investigation, in that it is fact-finding. That includes, but is not limited to: officer statements, offender statements, victim statements, witness statements, evidence collection, photography, videography, body-worn/squad camera video collection, witness or surveillance video collection, etc.

Who else assists the MAIT team in their investigations?

- The State of Wisconsin Crime Laboratory - Crime Scene Response Unit has been an invaluable partner. The Crime Scene Response Unit will respond to investigate small, medium, large, or very large crime scenes which allow investigators to track down video or witnesses, meet with family members, or do other investigative tasks. Likewise, the Wisconsin State Patrol has responded when necessary to help document crash scenes using the latest technology in crime scene mapping tools.

How is the MAIT investigation completed?

- Upon completion of a MAIT investigation it is presented in its entirety to the District Attorney's office by the Lead Agency investigator. The District Attorney or Deputy District Attorney personally reviews the case and gives a legal opinion on the outcome of the case. Regardless of the jurisdiction of the lead MAIT agency conducting the investigation, the case will be presented to the District Attorney within the county where the incident occurred. This ensures proper legal review as well as final legal disposition of the investigation/case.

How does the MAIT team ensure best practices are followed?

- The MAIT team is led by two people: the 'Team Commander' and 'Chairman' of the team. The team commander is in charge of an investigative division from a lead agency. For example, the first team commander was from the Milwaukee Police Department's Homicide Division. It has since moved to other executives from lead agencies. The team commander position is voted on every two years by the lead agencies. Their duties include training new team members, logistical issues with callouts and relaying investigative concerns to the "Chairman." The chairman is an executive (Police Chief) from a lead agency. Their duties include a monthly briefing to other executives in Milwaukee County as well as a yearly briefing. They are responsible for the overall team. The chairman position is voted on every two years by the lead agencies.
- MAIT seeks out and provides training to all new members, as well as on-going training to all current members. Training is provided to the MAIT members on the best practices in investigations, as well as specific training on officer involved critical incidents. Specifically, training has been provided by Force Science, whose mission is: through high-quality

research and training, Force Science advances expert decision-making, superior performance, and honest accountability in public safety. The MAIT team receives training for any new members, as well as on-going training for its members, to stay relevant with current research, applications of unbiased scientific principles and processes related to officer critical incidents.