

Critical Incident Response Plan

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

A Critical Incident is an event or set of circumstances that have the potential to result in physical or psychological outcomes ranging from mild trauma to a fatality for one or more people.

It is important to note that a person does not have to be directly involved in the trauma (e.g. injury) to be impacted by a critical incident. For example, a critical incident may occur at an organisation when a young person is notified that their parent has died in an accident. It could be deemed that other young people and workers at the organisation will be psychologically impacted by the announcement of the death and their observation of the response of the young person whose parent has died.

Another example may include a natural disaster, involving widespread death, injury and destruction. The young people involved in the organisation may not have any connection to people who have died or been injured, however, they could be impacted and need support to process what has taken place.

In both of these situations, a Critical Incident Response Plan may be warranted to manage the response to this situation.

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN?

A Critical Incident Response Plan is a systematic approach to planning and implementing an immediate and long-term response to a critical incident. It has 3 main stages.

1. Preparedness
2. Response
3. Recovery

Within the Preparedness stage, those responsible for the organisation's programs are responsible for ensuring that people are allocated to specific roles to be exercised during the Response stage. It is also important that clear descriptions are allocated to each of those roles and those fulfilling the roles are adequately briefed on their responsibilities. It is not necessary for a separate person to fulfill each role. However, when allocating roles, it is advisable to be mindful that in the Response stage some actions need to take place simultaneously.

GETTING STARTED...

1. Meet with your Safe Community Team to consider possible critical incidents that may occur during your program either on-site or off-site.
2. Complete the Preparedness stage by allocating role and briefing people on roles and responsibilities. It may be necessary to provide training on a role to adequately equip those fulfilling that specific role.
3. If a critical incident occurs, implement the Response stage.
4. After the incident, implement the recovery stage, being mindful that this stage may take longer for different people, depending upon how they have been impacted by the critical incident.

**Plan
Dimension**

Role

Role Description

PREPAREDNESS

Critical Incident Response Manager	<p>This person is responsible for managing/overseeing the response. They will hold the authority in the situation and direct all others in response.</p> <p>They are responsible for ensuring safe and orderly emergency evacuation and safety measures are used during the “Response” period.</p> <p>They are also responsible for liaising with senior workers during the “Response” and “Recovery” periods.</p>
Media Liaison	<p>This person is the only person who has authority to liaise with the media during or after the specific critical incident, excepting in cases where the organization's Head of Agency /Entity also chooses to make a media statement.</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> In fulfilling this role, the Media Liaison person is not to seek out media contact but respond to unsolicited media attention following guidelines as set down by the person fulfilling this role is also to be approved by the organization's Head of Agency /Entity</p>
Parental Liaison	<p>This person is responsible for notifying the parents of any child or young person injured during a critical incident.</p>
Emergency Services Liaison	<p>This person is responsible for contacting emergency services (<i>ambulance, fire brigade, police, SES, etc.</i>) if required.</p>
Support (<i>immediate & on-going</i>)	<p>This person is responsible for coordinating and providing support to workers, children and young people who have been impacted by the critical incident, during the “Response” and “Recovery” periods.</p>
Supervision of children & young people not involved in critical incident	<p>This person is responsible for ensuring that adequate supervision is provided for all children or young people not immediately involved in the critical incident, during the “Response” period.</p> <p>This person is also responsible for ensuring that all children or young people are not exposed to media attention during the “Response” period.</p>
Emergency First Aid Officer	<p>This person is responsible for administering emergency first aid, <i>prior to arrival of emergency medical treatment</i>, to any child, young person or leader impacted by a critical incident.</p>
<p align="center">**Complete a Risk Assessment & Risk Action Plan for each activity</p>	

<i>Plan Dimension</i>	Steps	Details
RESPONSE	1	Attend to any injured children, young people or workers
		Supervise / ensure safety of uninjured children or young people
	2	Administer emergency first aid to injured children, young people or workers
		Notify emergency services as required (ambulance, fire brigade, police, SES, etc) and senior workers
		Notify the immediate family of any injured child, young person or leader
	3	Complete Incident Report Form
	4	Provide support to all people impacted by the critical incident

<i>Plan Dimension</i>	Steps	Details
RECOVERY	Critical Incident Response Manager Support	Complete an evaluation of how the critical incident was handled with suggestions for improvement (eg. How it could be better handled if it occurred in the future, or how to minimise the likelihood of it happening again) Debrief with senior workers & support person on processes followed and outcomes of critical incident Response.
	Support	In consultation with parents and workers, develop and implement a debriefing and support plan for children, young people and workers impacted by the critical incident.
	Senior Workers	In consultation with Critical Incident Response Manager, prepare a letter to parents whose children or young people were impacted by the critical incident, provided information on a "need to know" basis. In consultation with Critical Incident Response Manager, prepare and submit a briefing paper to relevant state executive /organisation. Liaise with insurance and legal bodies to ensure compliance in responding to critical incident has been met.
	NSW State Executive / Organisation	Prepare a media statement regarding the incident to be used if required.

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Disclaimer: This publication is not legal advice. The ideas and procedures herein are based on nationally recognised good practice advice and have been written with due regard to Australian legislation March 2020.

Legal advice may need to be sought when responding to individual incidents.

