

## CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN OVERVIEW

### 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 (*eg. injury*) to be impacted by a critical incident. For example, a critical incident may occur at a youth camp when a young person is notified that their parent has died in an accident. It could be deemed that other young people and leaders at the camp 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 a youth group 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 ministry 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 be taken place simultaneously.

### GETTING STARTED...

1. Meet with your ministry team to consider possible critical incidents that may occur during your ministry 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 role to adequately equip those fulfilling 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.

## CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN<sup>1</sup>

Dimension of Plan	Role	Role Description
<b>Preparedness</b>	Select people to fulfil the following roles: (Please note: Some people are likely to have one or more of the roles)	
	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 church leadership 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 senior church leadership 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 Diocese.</p> <p>The person fulfilling this role is also to be approved by Rector/ most senior person in the church.</p>
	Parental/Family Liaison	This person is responsible for notifying the parents or family of any person injured during a critical incident.
	Emergency Services Liaison	This person is responsible for contacting emergency services ( <i>ambulance, fire brigade, police, SES, etc.</i> ) if required.
	Pastoral Support ( <i>immediate &amp; on-going</i> )	This person is responsible for co-ordinating and providing pastoral support to leaders and people who have been impacted by the critical incident, during the "Response" and "Recovery" periods.
	Supervision of people not involved in critical incident	<p>This person is responsible for ensuring that adequate supervision is provided for all people not immediately involved in the critical incident, during the "Response" period.</p> <p>This person is also responsible for ensuring that all people are not exposed to media attention during the "Response" period.</p>
	Emergency First Aid Officer	This person is responsible for administering emergency first aid, <i>prior to arrival of emergency medical treatment</i> , to any person or leader impacted by a critical incident.
	Complete a Risk Assessment & Risk Action Plan for each activity	

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Head of Department Implementation Pack, ACC-NSW, 2008

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

Dimension of Plan	Role	Role Description
<b>Recovery</b>	Critical Incident Response Manager	Complete an evaluation of how the critical incident was handled with suggestions for improvement (eg. <i>How it could be better handled if it occurred in the future, or how to minimise the likelihood of it happening again</i> )  Debrief with senior church leadership & pastoral support person on processes followed and outcomes of Critical Incident Response.
	Pastoral Support	In consultation with parents , family and leaders, develop and implement a debriefing and pastoral support plan for people and leaders impacted by the critical incident.
	Senior Church Leadership	In consultation with Critical Incident Response Manager, prepare a letter to all families of those who were impacted by the critical incident, providing information on a "need to know" basis.  In consultation with Critical Incident Response Manager, prepare and submit a briefing paper to the Bishop.  Liaise with insurance and legal bodies to ensure compliance in responding to critical incident has been met.
	Bishop's Office	Prepare a media statement regarding the incident to be used if required.