

Critical Incident Policy

Surf Life Saving Western Australia Inc. (SLSWA) recognises that a duty of care is owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

A critical incident is a traumatic event, or the threat of such which results in extreme stress, fear or injury. This may include but is not limited to:

- Serious injury, illness or death of a student or staff
- Students or staff lost or injured on an excursion
- A missing student
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Physical assault
- Student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence
- Natural disaster e.g. earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm or extremes of temperature
- Fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
- Social issues e.g. drug use, sexual assault

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

SLSWA Staff will follow workplace Emergency Response Procedures as set out in their employment contracts.

SLSWA staff delivering training at alternate workplaces will follow the emergency response procedures as set out at the respective business.

SLSWA has a Lifesaving Department that specifically deals with the prevention and management of critical incidents. This Department will be called upon, in the event of a critical incident associated with the RTO delivery of service.

The process for management may include:

- Risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action.
- Analysis of requirements to address these hazards.
- Establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. Police, fire brigade, ambulance, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services.
- 24-hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident.
- Development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified.
- Dissemination of planned procedures.
- Regular review of the critical incident plan.
- Assisting with the implementation of the critical incident plan and arranging appropriate staff development.
- Budget allocation for emergencies.

CRITICAL INCIDENT PLANS

All critical incident plans assign responsibilities among relevant staff members; cover all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

- Identify the nature of the critical incident
- Notification of the critical incident team leader
- Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy
- Assignment of duties and resources to RTO or Lifesaving staff
- Seeking advice and help from any necessary emergency services/hospital/medical services
- Dissemination of information to parents and family members
- Completion of an Incident Report Log (in the first instance, this may have additional documentation depending on the type of incident)
- Media response if required (see below)
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

Additional Action (48 – 72 hours)

- Assess the need for support and counselling for those, directly and indirectly, involved (ongoing)
- Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate
- Restore normal functioning and RTO delivery

Follow-up – monitoring, support, evaluation

- Identification of any other people who may be affected by the critical incident and access to support services for affected community members
- Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties
- Provision of accurate information to staff and students where appropriate
- Evaluation of critical incident management
- Be aware of any possible longer-term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings

RESOURCES

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The Lifesaving Department uses its discretion to provide adequate resources – both physical and personnel – to meet the needs of specific situations. Staff will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

MANAGING THE MEDIA

- a) Manage access of the media to the scene, and to staff, students and relatives.
- b) The General Manager (Lifesaving and Training) should normally handle all initial media calls.
- c) Determine what the official RTO response will be.
- d) All facts should be checked before speaking to the media.
- e) If accurate information is unavailable or the issue is of a sensitive nature, explain that questions cannot be answered at this time.
- f) Avoid implying blame or fault for any part of the incident as this can have significant legal implications.
- g) The General Manager (Lifesaving and Training) may delegate media liaison to another senior member of staff.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

After every critical incident, a meeting of the critical incident team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required. If appropriate, this process will incorporate feedback from all staff, students and a local community representative.