



Critical Incident Management

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Introduction

This procedure outlines the requirements for the management of critical or potentially critical incidents at workplaces to minimise risks to health and safety and minimise their impact on people.

Definitions

Critical Incident is a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) which has the potential to harm life or well-being and causes extreme stress, fear or injury to the person experiencing or witnessing the event.

Post-Incident Debriefing is a formal group process conducted by a professionally qualified person, to alleviate the pressures after a critical incident.

Traumatic Stressor is an actual or threatened event such as death, serious injury, human suffering or violence, such as accidents, including fatalities or near misses, assault (verbal or physical, including threats), robbery and serious physical injury.

Roles and Responsibilities

Line Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- implementation of this procedure within their area of responsibility
- identifying potentially critical incident circumstances, assessing and controlling of critical incident risks effectively
- implementing, monitoring and maintaining risk control measures for critical or potentially critical incidents in their areas of responsibility
- regularly monitoring the effectiveness of critical incident risk control measures and rectify any deviations from procedures
- consulting with employees on critical incident practices or any proposed changes
- ensuring employees are trained and competent in how to behave during a critical incident
- ensuring the well-being of employees following a critical incident.

Employees are responsible for:

- not placing themselves or others at risk of injury
- reporting to line management any critical or potentially critical incident and any significant symptoms which may have resulted from a critical incident
- assisting Line Managers with the identification of hazards, the assessment of risks and implementation of risk control measures related to critical incidents
- following established critical incident procedures
- availing themselves of the support mechanisms in the event of exposure to critical incidents.

Procedure

Potentially Critical Incidents

The potential for critical incidents in all University workplaces shall be identified and a risk assessment completed in respect to identified potentially critical incidents in accordance with the OHSW Procedure – Hazard Management and form [OHSW 2](#) - risk assessment worksheet.

Risk assessments for potentially critical incidents shall take account of, but not limited to, such matters as:

- the isolation of worksites
- the shift work arrangements or weekend work



- amount and location of cash handling at the site
- the nature of contact with the public, in particular the potential for contact with people who may be distressed
- current procedures in place to manage a critical incident
- security arrangements at the worksite including the location and contact arrangements with security services

Critical Incident Procedure

Procedures for the management of potentially critical incidents shall be developed in consultation with employees at worksites from the outcomes of risk assessments

Training in the Critical Incident Procedure shall be provided to ensure that employees are competent in the procedure.

Procedures in critical incident management should consider the management of an actual critical incident and procedures should include the following actions:

1. at the time of occurrence
 2. immediately after
 3. following
 4. post
1. Action at the time of occurrence of a critical incident
 - Contact emergency services and campus security (telephone extension 88 888) as soon as it is safe to do so
 - Ensure injured and/or traumatised employees and members of the public are provided with an appropriate emergency response
 - Inform the relevant Line Manager
 - Ensure support for employees, relatives and others is available in the event an incident is still continuing.
 2. Action immediately after a critical incident
 - Allow employees to contact their family/close friend to advise them of the situation
 - Assist members of the public with contacting their family/close friend, or assist them by arranging transport for them if needed
 - Ensure the site or anything associated with the incident is not disturbed in relation to a Police matter or when an investigation is required by SafeWork SA Inspectors
 - Provide people who have been exposed to the critical incident with emotional support and practical assistance
 - Inform the relevant Senior Manager, OHSW & IM Services and the worksite Health and Safety Representative of the situation
 - Inform all worksite employees about what has occurred as necessary
 - Provide support through the Employee Assistance Program provider, Davidson Trahaire, to provide needed assistance and support. The contact phone number for Davidson Trahaire is 1300 360 364 and this should be included in the worksite procedure.
 3. Action following a critical incident
 - Encourage employees to have an individual appointment with the Employee Assistance Program provider, Davidson Trahaire, to assess the need for further intervention
 - Provide an incident debriefing for employees involved in the critical incident
 - Provide a professional post trauma counselling service if necessary
 - Return the worksite to normal operation as soon as practicable.
 4. Action post critical incident
 - An investigation of the incident shall be conducted using the OHSW Procedure – Incident Reporting and Investigation and completing and submitting [OHSW Online Hazard or Incident Investigation Report](#).
 - The investigation should be commenced within 24 hours of the incident to record factual data about the occurrence and develop a good understanding of what it was and how it happened, so that decisions regarding necessary preventative action can be made.



Further Assistance

Line Managers and staff may seek further advice regarding critical incident management and the development of site specific procedures from OHSW & IM Services 8302 1635.

References

[University OHSW&IM Policy](#)

[University OHSW Strategic Plan 2009 - 2011 \(PDF 158kb\)](#)

[University Injury Management Strategic Plan 2009 - 2011 \(PDF 85kb\)](#)

[OHSW & Injury Management System \(PDF 128kb\)](#)

[University OHSW Procedure – Hazard Management](#)

[University OHSW Procedure – Incident Reporting and Investigation](#)

[University OHSW Procedure – Working Alone](#)

[Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986](#)

[Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Regulations, 2010](#)

[Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986](#)

[AS/NZS 4804: 1997 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems – General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques.](#)