



# INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCEDURE

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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure there is a rapid and appropriate response to incidents that occur in the Diocese of North West Australia (“the Diocese”).

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all ministry centres and relates to all programs and activities taking place on Diocesan property or on behalf of the Diocese.

## 3 PROCEDURE

### Definitions of Incidents

- 3.1 An incident is defined as an undesired event which resulted or could have resulted in harm, damage or loss. Whilst some incidents are unavoidable, other incidents may have resulted from unsafe conditions, unsafe acts and/or errors of judgment. When two or more of these factors are present, the likelihood of an incident resulting is higher.
- 3.2 A **Minor Incident** is an unplanned event that interrupts the completion of an activity that includes minor, non-life threatening personal injury/illness and/or minor damage to property or the environment.
- 3.3 A **Minor Near Miss** is an incident where no personal injury/illness, property or environmental damage actually occurred, but, given a slight shift in time or position, could have occurred.
- 3.4 A **Serious Incident** is an unplanned event that interrupts the completion of an activity that includes a life threatening personal injury/illness and/or major damage to property or the environment.
- 3.5 A **Serious Near Miss** is an incident where no serious personal life threatening injury/illness, property or environmental damage actually occurred, but, for safety precautions, rescue measures, or chance, could have resulted in a serious incident.
- 3.6 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 can be any event that has a stressful impact sufficient enough to overwhelm a person’s usual coping strategies.

Critical incidents can be sudden, shocking and outside the range of ordinary human experience. However, it can also be an event that has a specific personal significance to the individual and may result in strong emotional and/or physical reactions.

## Responding to Incidents

- 3.7 Our response to incident procedures management applies to our common law duty of care, Occupation Work Health & Safety legislation and specifically to the minimising of safety risks for all people who are in our care.
- 3.8 Incidents and critical incident response procedures form part of the ministry centre's overall site safety procedures.
- 3.9 The ministry centre governing group will delegate the task of management of incidents and critical incidents.
- 3.10 The ministry centre Safety Officer or Minister-in-Charge is responsible for the implementation of this procedure.
- 3.11 Every incident will require:
- immediate response involves caring for those directly affected and contact with parents/caregiver.
  - follow up over the next 12-24 hours (or longer), including care for those directly involved.
  - a formal review, to determine the reason for the incident, and changes to be made to minimise the risk of the same incident occurring the next time the same activity/event is run.
  - any injuries or accidents which require secondary medical attention e.g. visit to a doctor or medical centre should be written up on an incident report form.
  - where the impact of the incident has been felt by a wider group, reporting to the wider concerned group may be done with the permission of those involved in the incident
  - all incidents involving child or young person ministries are to be reported in writing to parents and/or care-givers
  - all incidents need to be reported to the Diocesan Registrar using the Diocesan Incident Report Form, attached at Appendix 1
- 3.12 In addition to actions for all incidents, serious incidents also require:
- in the moment, caring for those indirectly affected; and
  - follow-up in the next 12–24 hours for those indirectly affected.
- 3.13 In addition to actions for minor and serious incidents, critical incidents also require the development and implementation of a Critical Incident Response Plan using the Developing Incident Response Team and Plan Template, attached at Appendix 2

## 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 Ministry centre governing groups are responsible for ensuring this procedure is followed in their centre

### Reporting

- 4.2 Compliance with this procedure is reported in the monthly or annual return/reports to the Diocese.

### Records management

- 4.3 The Registry maintains all records relevant to administering this policy using its recordkeeping system.

## 5 DEFINITIONS

5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the Diocesan Glossary.

## 6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Safe Program Policy

## 7 FEEDBACK

7.1 Church members may provide feedback about this document by emailing [registrar@anglicandnwa.org](mailto:registrar@anglicandnwa.org).

## 8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Diocesan Council
Administrator	Diocesan Registrar
Next Review Date	19/06/2024

## 9 APPENDICES

1. Incident Report Form
2. Guidelines to Developing an Incident Response Team and Plan

## INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Please refer to the Guidelines overleaf for completing this form.

Name of ministry centre			
Person-in-Charge			
Person-in-Charge Contact Details			
Date of incident			
Location of incident			
Time of incident			
Description of incident – <i>include specific location at venue</i>			
Name of person/s involved in incident			
Contact details for person/s involved in incident			
Description of injuries sustained or complaint			
Description of medical or other attention required as a result of the incident – <i>including any First Aid assistance given at the time of the incident and by whom</i>			
Describe any actions taken by program leader coordinator as a result of the incident			
Were there any witnesses to the incident?	Yes	No	
Contact details for any witnesses			
Did the incident occur as a result of a risk or hazard?	Yes	No	
Had the risk or hazard been identified prior to the ministry activity commencing?	Yes	No	
What measures were used to eliminate or control the risk or hazard?			
What measures could be taken in the future to avoid a repeat of this incident?			

Completed form to be forwarded to ministry centre governing group and the Diocesan Registrar

**Office use only:**

Report received by:	Follow-up action if required:	Date:	Signature:
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## GUIDELINES TO DEVELOPING AN INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM AND PLAN

### Some reasons that a response team and plan may be needed:

- A. **Health issues during services.** – e.g. people fainting / unconscious, vomiting, heart attack, etc
- B. **Threat of emotional or physical harm during a service** – e.g. Severe disruption due to mental health issues, physically violent outburst due to disagreement
- C. **Threat of emotional or physical harm during a ministry program not on a Sunday** – e.g. Severe disruption due to mental health issues, physically violent outburst due to disagreement
- D. **Physical threat from someone trying to enter church property/access someone in church building.** Basically this requires a "lock down" response and needs some specific responses - not covered in these general principles.
- E. **Trauma in parish due to a 'professional standards' matter** – e.g. Minister-in-Charge or other senior leader has had an allegation made against them

The information below will need to be adjusted to apply to a given situation. The key components that would apply across all situations include:

- Appointment of people to roles
- Clear plan for response that is based around Preparation, Response and Recovery
- Templates for statements to be used during a Response and Recovery phase.

### Preparation Stage

1. Select your Response teams for all services and key people to handle issues in other ministries
2. People selected need to be able to be calm under pressure or perceived emotional or physical threat
3. Once your teams have been selected, the names need to be communicated to the rest of the congregation. This is to reduce likelihood that a well-meaning person will want to take control during an incident/emergency/perceived threat.
4. Two key people/managers need to be selected for each team. These people make all the key decisions about what happens during an incident.
5. The reason to have two people selected for each team in this role, is to increase likelihood that at least one will be present at the time of an incident. If both happen to be present, then at the first sign of an incident they need to decide who will take on key role.

### Key roles to be filled:

1. **Incident manager** - two per service / ministry  
This person is to have oversight of response plan. It is essential that these people can determine when there is risk of emotional or physical harm and make a decisive call to remove people away from site of incident, including closing a service and removing people from building.

#### Template for stopping a service - Announcement made by Incident Manager

1. Unfortunately, as it is not safe in here currently, we need to stop the service and ask people to leave the building.
2. Please follow directions from XXX to move slowly out of the building and congregate XXXX.  
**Note:** Prior to an incident, plan what exits may be used in the event of requiring to remove people from the building. If it is not possible to remove people from the building through an exit other than requiring them to move near to where the person is standing, encourage people to move close together behind any large items of furniture and remain so until police arrive.

If a person causing an incident needs to be approached, it is the Incident Manager who does this. However, at no time is an Incident Manager to take any risks that could result in emotional trauma or physical harm to themselves. **They are not to be martyrs.**

2. **Person to contact emergency services - depending upon type of need (eg police, ambulance) - two per service/ministry.**

**Template for statement when contacting emergency services**

Include:

1. Name of person ringing
2. Name of church
3. Phone number ringing from - where possible use phone in office
4. Type of incident
5. Name of the person causing the incident
6. Location of incident
7. Request for attendance

3. **People to pastorally care for those not directly affected** - Select up to four per service / ministry depending on size of group to be cared for.

This can also include removing those not directly affected away from site of incident if required.

**Template for pastoral statement if people are removed from site of incident**

Key components of a pastoral statement to include:

1. It is unfortunate that we have needed to take this action of stopping service/asking you to move, but your emotional well-being is important to us
2. (Name of person) is unwell/confused/etc and needs help.
3. We recognise that what you just witnessed could be distressing and we want to make sure you are OK.
4. We have a group of people (list names) who would be happy to pastorally care for you now, if you feel you need to debrief about what has happened and/or would like someone to pray for you.
5. If you feel you would prefer to just go home now, that is fine, but if at any time during the next week, you need to talk about the impact of the incident on you, please contact one of the pastoral care group I have just named.
6. Next week/Sunday we will provide you with information of how things have panned out over the week.
7. Let's just spend a few moments in prayer while we are together.

Have a copy of these templates in easily accessible location in the ministry centre office.

4. **People to take attendance using parish directory if an incident occurs during a service** - Two per service/ministry. See sample below. If not during a service, collate a list of all present This information is important for follow up in recovery stage of an incident response plan

Name	Comments <i>Insert information about response or distress at time of incident if applicable</i>
Mary Smith	Was visibly shaking just after incident

Keep all documentation related to your Response Plans in a clearly marked and accessible location in the church office.

**Response Stage**

Seven Key processes to follow:

1. Recognise incident has occurred
2. Incident Manager to approach person- if safe to do so.  
In the case of a threat, the person causing threat is to be calmly encouraged to move to another location away from the congregation/those in ministry  
**At no time should an Incident Manager or anyone else to attempt to remove by force a person causing an incident.**
3. Incident Manager makes decision that:
  - a) A service is stopped
  - b) Emergency service is to be called
  - c) Those not directly affected are to be moved away if at risk of emotional or physical harm.

4. Emergency services contacted as appropriate
5. People are moved away from site of incident if needed and attendance is taken using parish directory
6. Once people not directly affected are moved away, a pastoral statement is to be given.
7. After emergency services have completed their task, the Response Team meet to debrief - led by Incident Manager.

**Guidelines from formal debriefing template may be used as appropriate**

8. Incident Manager advises the Diocesan Registrar.
9. Incident Manager completes an Incident Report form that is to be sent to Diocesan Registrar.

**Recovery Stage**

1. Once the person causing the incident has left the vicinity and all members of congregation have left, all members of the **Response Team** meet to debrief from incident and how it was handled by **Response Team**. This will be led by the Incident Manager.  
Professional debriefing offered at the Diocese's expense if required. This will be coordinated by Registrar.
2. The members of **Pastoral Care Group** advise on how people reacted and possible follow up support required.
  - a) A plan for follow up and ongoing support to those impacted developed.
  - b) Plan is implemented and overseen by the Minister-in-Charge.
  - c) Feedback on implementation of Plan provided to the Parish Council and Registrar.
3. Ongoing support for Church Leaders to be monitored by Bishop.
4. The Bishop to write to all those present during in the incident on behalf of Diocese. Apology and option for professional debriefing given.
5. Registrar to advise regarding insurance.
6. Registrar to liaise with Police in relation to other possible actions.
7. Any further meetings to be facilitated by Registrar or their delegate.

**Responding to a breach of a Trespass Notice / AVO / MRO**

1. Pre-arrange with Police for them to do "drive-bys" during church services or event, if there are concerns that a person may arrive at venue during a service/event.
2. Follow the guidelines above; except that once the person appears on site the Police are called.
3. If the person attempts to enter the building, the Incident Manager asks them to leave, without coming within a 3-metre radius of the person.
4. If people do not leave immediately, follow the guidelines for removing people from the building.