

Principles of Critical Incident Management

January 14, 2016

Goal and Objectives

Goal:

Improve critical incident management planning and management among Board members and senior staff

Objectives:

1. Review the Critical Incident Management Plan
2. Improve the understanding of the complexities of a crisis
3. Clarify roles and responsibilities
4. Apply skills addressing a complex crisis

“Next week there can’t be any crisis my
schedule is full”

- Henry Kissinger

What is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident is a situation that may cause damage or danger, whether deliberate or accidental, to any part of an organization – its personnel, performance, reputation, product or brand – that demands immediate, concerted management decisions and actions which may attract public/media attention.

Is the situation likely to:

- result in grave injury or death of staff?
- significantly disrupt normal operations?
- result in significant damage to property?
- undermine reputation and/or brand?
- result in lack of access to critical stakeholders?

Critical Incidents

Potential critical incidents may include:

- Death of a staff member
- Complex medical evacuation
- Non-medical evacuation
- Extreme insecurity (insurgency, ethnic violence, etc.)
- Staff abduction
- Staff detention

Critical Incident Management Principles

When a critical incident occurs:

- Assemble the appropriate team in a timely manner
- Gain sufficient knowledge and analysis of the facts and the context of the situation in question
- Assess potential threats
- Identify stakeholders and their needs
- Establish effective communications among stakeholders
- Control flow of information among stakeholders
- Make decisions in a clear, decisive and timely manner
- Plan for contingencies
- Attend to the various needs of all parties to the incident
- Document everything

Critical Incident Management Principles

Assemble the appropriate team in a timely manner

- Core Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)
 - CIMT Leader
 - CIMT Facilitator
 - Human Resources
 - Administrator
 - Internal Communications
 - Media & External Communications
- Expanded CIMT (safety and security, legal, finance, etc.)
- Other co-opted members (logistics, travel, external contractors)
- Ensure that CIMT members' other duties are covered
- Prepare for CIMT member rotations (for long term events)

Critical Incident Management Principles

Gain sufficient knowledge and analysis of the facts and the context of the situation in question

- Where has it occurred?
- What has happened?
- Why has it happened?
- Who or what is in danger at this moment?

Assess potential threats

- What is nature of threat?
- Is there a risk of publicity?
- What's likely to happen next?
- How long have we got?
- What are the complicating factors?

Critical Incident Management Principles

Identify stakeholders and their needs

- Who has an interest in the outcome?
- Who might affect/influence the outcome?
- Who needs to be communicated with?

Establish effective communications among stakeholders

- Who needs to know what?
- How will this information be communicated? By whom?
- How frequently?
- How much detail?

Critical Incident Management Principles

Control flow of information among stakeholders

- Which information is restricted?
- How will restricted information be handled?
- What is the media strategy? Proactive? Reactive?
- What is the contingency if control of information is lost?

Make decisions in a clear, decisive and timely manner

- Who are decision makers at various levels?
- What are the critical/priority decisions to be made?
- How will decisions be recorded/documentated?
- What action points are linked to decisions?

Critical Incident Management Principles

Plan for Contingencies

- What are possible scenarios?
- How might these impact the current incident?
- How can possible risks be mitigated?
- What are alternative responses?

Attend to the various needs of all parties to the crisis

- What are the needs of the those directly impacted by the incident?
- What are the needs of family members?
- What are the needs of the CIMT/IMT members?
- What are the needs of other stakeholders?

Critical Incident Management Principles

Document everything

- Who will be the note taker(s)?
- How will information be recorded/secured/shared/stored?
- Who will have access to documentation?
- How will confidentiality/sensitivity be protected?

Post Incident Support

- Ensure the physical and psychological health and safety of all individuals directly involved in the incident
- Offer professional psychological support to those involved in the incident, IMT and CIMT
- Debrief those involved in the incident
- Prepare staff for post-incident realities (stress reaction, media intrusion, available support, reintegration)
- Conduct after action review to reinforce positive incident management actions and identify areas for improvement
- Revise crisis/incident management plan as warranted

Golden Hour

FIRST RESPONSE PROTOCOL The first hour of a crisis	
Roles & Responsibilities	Confirm respective roles and responsibilities including any cover for absences; recap on standard process/protocols and any technical support needed to establish secure communications among remote CMT members.
Facts	What do we know and what do we need to know? Get as much information as possible. Ensure all parties share the same set of information.
Assumptions	What do we believe has occurred or contributed to the situation?
Scenarios	Worst case and most likely . (Consider first as individuals and then brainstorm. Don't discount anything, and then bring together.)
Priorities	Establish our priorities including information requirements and immediate tasking.
Response Options	Consider the range of options available. What needs to be done now and what can wait ?
Your Objective(s)	Set objectives (i.e. what indicators must we achieve to solve the problem and return to normal business).
Stakeholders	Whose crisis? Identify the range of stakeholders and prioritize them according to the interest/influence they have.
Key Messages	Establish the messages which must be conveyed to stakeholders and who is responsible for preparing and communicating. Establish who the main contact point is for each stakeholder.
Review	Review at the end of the hour.



Primacy

- When a critical incident arises who takes the lead?
- Who is ultimately responsible?
- How is this determined?
- Do we have a protocol?

Decision making

- How are decisions to be made?
- Who decides what?
- Are there likely to be different levels of decision making?
- How will differences of opinion be resolved?

Stakeholders

- Who has a stake in the outcome of the critical incident?
- How do we determine this?
- What are the needs of the stakeholders?
- How are stakeholders actions likely to affect the outcome?
- What can we do to meet stakeholder needs?

Roles and Responsibilities

- Who does what?
- How is this determined?
- Are there specific tasks and measureable outcomes?
- Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined

Virtual Collaboration

- With CIMT and IMTs located in various places and in different time zones and with the possibility that CIMT/IMT staff may be traveling when a critical incident occurs we are likely to operate in a 'virtual collaboration environment'.
- Change in mindset
 - Not only static office space
 - Different time zones
 - Facilitation
- Improved technology
 - Teleconferencing
 - Video links
 - Virtual work spaces

Key Learning Points

- Preparedness is vital for the successful management of any critical incident, especially where a coordinated and effective response is required.
- The golden rule when dealing with any critical incident is the primacy of life over assets and program considerations. All incident management planning and responses must be in pursuit of this main objective.
- Critical incident management is dependent upon good decisions being taken quickly, which requires effective information flow and clear channels of communication that all staff understand and abide by.

Questions?

