[insert organisation name/logo]

Emergency and Critical Incident Policy

Document Status: **Draft or Final**

Date Issued: **[date]**

Lead Author: **[name and position]**

Approved by: **[insert organisation name] Board of Directors on [date]**

Scheduled Review Date: **[date]**

Record of Policy Review

Review Date	Person Initiating/Leading Review	Other People Consulted

Triggers for Policy Review (tick all that apply)

☐ Standard review is timetabled.

☐ A gap has been identified

☐ Additional knowledge or information has become available to supplement the policy.

☐ External factors

  ☐ Policy is no longer relevant/current due to changes in external operating environment.

  ☐ There are changes to laws, regulations, terminology and/or government policy.

  ☐ Changes to funding environment, including requirements of funding bod(y)ies

☐ Other (please specify).

☐ Internal / organisational factors

  ☐ A stakeholder has identified a need, eg by email, telephone etc

  ☐ A serious or critical incident has occurred, requiring an urgent review.

  ☐ Need for consistency in service delivery across programs and organisations.

  ☐ Separate, stand-alone policy is now warranted

  ☐ A near miss has occurred, requiring a review to prevent a serious/critical incident in the future

Additional Comments   [*for example, policy now covers details related to new legislation*].

Emergency and Critical Incident Policy

1.   Purpose and Scope

Emergencies and critical incidents in the workplace can affect people physically and psychologically, and affect program continuity of **[insert organisation name].**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure **[insert organisation name]** prepares for and effectively responds to emergency situations and critical incidents through the appropriate use of resources. The prevention and effective management of emergency situations and critical incidents can assist to minimise the negative impact of an unexpected event.

This policy applies to all staff, consumers, volunteers, Board members and students.

2.   Definitions

An <u>emergency</u> is an unplanned or imminent event that affects or threatens the health, safety or welfare of people, property and infrastructure, and which requires a significant and coordinated response. The defining characteristic of an emergency event or situation is that usual resources are overwhelmed or have the potential to be overwhelmed.

Emergencies may be a specific event with a clear beginning, end and recovery process, or a situation that develops over time and where the implications are gradual rather than immediate.

<u>Emergency management</u> is the coordination of an emergency response and management of recovery. The aim of emergency management is to minimise physical and psychological impacts on all parties and to minimise damage to assets, operations, reputation and staff productivity.

A <u>critical incident</u> is an unexpected traumatic event, involving personal or professional threat, which evokes extreme stress, fear or injury. Providing appropriate supports following a critical incident is part of emergency management.

A <u>traumatic event</u> is one in which a person experiences, witnesses or is confronted by experiences that involve actual, threatened or perceived death or serious injury and/ or threat to own or others physical and emotional integrity. The person's response may then include intense fear, feelings of helplessness and horror, which impact on their sense of 'self'.

<u>Complex trauma</u> refers to a condition resulting from multiple exposures to one or more traumas. When repeatedly exposed to traumatic stress, disruptions can occur in brain structure and function, central and autonomic nervous system arousal, endocrinological and immunological function. These biological disruptions interact with psychological, emotional, cognitive and spiritual processes

<u>Critical Incident Debriefing (CID)</u> is a preventative health measure to minimise the impact of traumatic events and the development of major psychological health problems such as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) Disorder.

3.   Principles

Emergency management planning is being prepared for events or incidents that stretch our ability to cope beyond normal day-to-day capacity.

The organisation is committed to the protection of consumers, staff, volunteers, Board members, students and visitors during emergencies.

[insert organisation name] swiftly and effectively responds to emergency situations, with the foremost goals of preserving life, protecting the organisation's property, and restoring operations as quickly as possible.

Critical incidents can be a threatening experience and appropriate supports are required to minimise long term effects arising from exposure to the trauma.

4.   Outcomes

Emergency situations are prevented as far as practical.

The negative impacts of emergency situations and critical incidents are minimised through effective management.

5.   Functions and Delegations

Position	Delegation/Task
Board of Directors	Endorse Emergency and Critical Incident Policy. Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.
Management	Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy. <u>CEO/Manager</u> Ensures development and implementation of Emergency and Critical Incident Policy. Ensures potential disaster and emergency situations are identified, and appropriate emergency management plans are in place. **[insert position]** Lead responsibility for implementation of emergency and critical incident procedures, including identification of potential situations, developing, documenting and communicating response plans, reporting on actual situations, and reviewing policy and procedures following a disaster or emergency situation.

	Coordinate staff training in emergency and critical incident, such as fire response, building evacuation, etc.
Staff	Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.
	Contribute to the development of Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.
	[Insert relevant positions and delegations, for example: Administration Officer Coordinate emergency evacuation drills.]

6.   Risk Management

All Board members, staff and volunteers are trained in disaster and emergency response procedures at induction and **[insert frequency]** by **[insert position]**.

Emergency evacuation drills are undertaken in all sites **[insert frequency]** under the instruction of **[insert position]**.

Disaster and emergency management plans are reviewed annually and/or following the event of a disaster or emergency situation.

As far as possible, traumatic events are prevented, and the impacts of trauma are minimised following traumatic events.
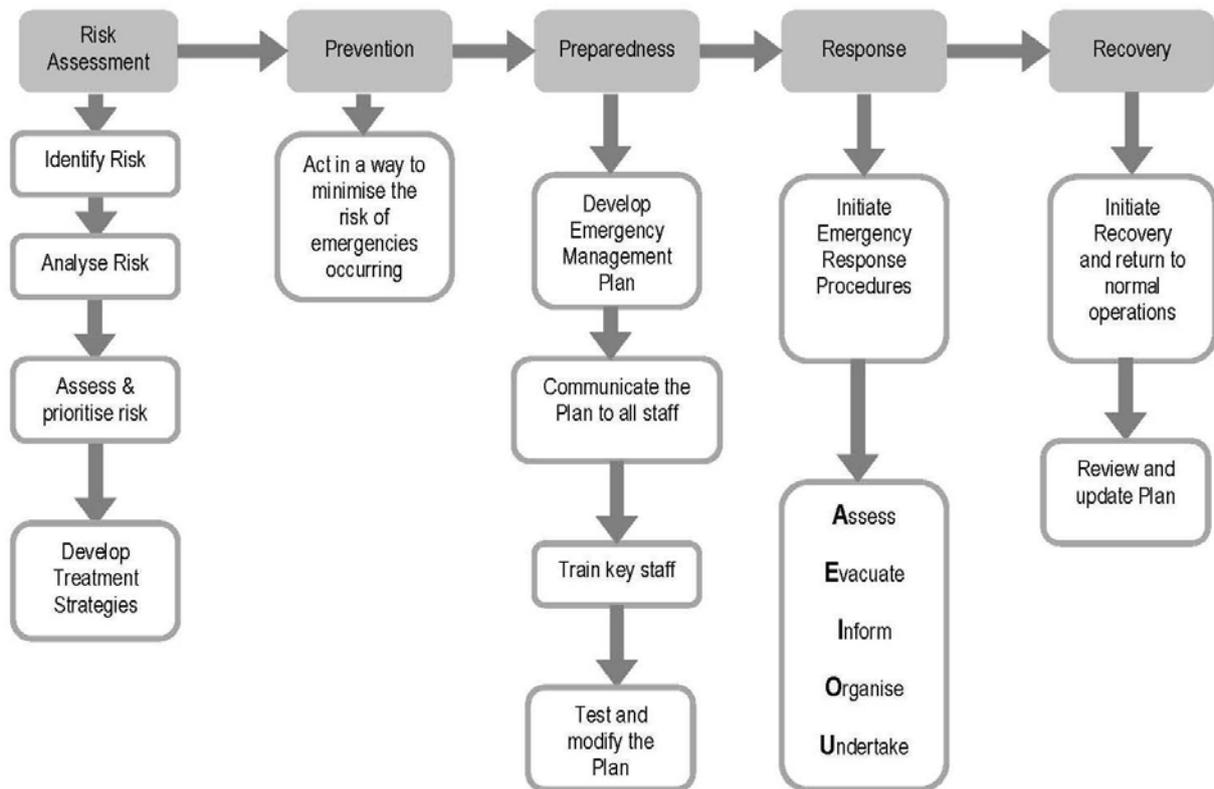
7.   Policy Implementation

All staff have access to and are familiar with policies and procedures relating to disaster emergency management.

All staff have information which outlines actions to follow for various disaster and emergency situations, and are supported to undertake training for specific roles in emergency and critical incident.

8.   Policy Detail

[insert organisation name] identifies, prevents and manages disaster and emergency situations within its sphere of responsibility and influence, until the arrival of appropriate emergency services. The approach to disaster and emergency management is illustrated in the diagram below:

Risk Assessment → **Prevention** → **Preparedness** → **Response** → **Recovery**

Risk Assessment:
- Identify Risk
- Analyse Risk
- Assess & prioritise risk
- Develop Treatment Strategies

Prevention:
- Act in a way to minimise the risk of emergencies occurring

Preparedness:
- Develop Emergency Management Plan
- Communicate the Plan to all staff
- Train key staff
- Test and modify the Plan

Response:
- Initiate Emergency Response Procedures
- **A**ssess
- **E**vacuate
- **I**nform
- **O**rganise
- **U**ndertake

Recovery:
- Initiate Recovery and return to normal operations
- Review and update Plan

A range of disaster and emergency situations may occur on the premises with the potential to impact on the safety of staff, Board members, volunteers, students, visitors and consumers, including:

- fire
- gas or water leak
- vehicle and other accidents
- chemical, radiation or biological spill
- bushfire
- storm
- earthquake
- bomb threat
- civil disorder or illegal occupancy
- hostage or terrorist situation
- death
- robbery
- physical (including sexual) assaults.

8.1 Risk Assessment

[insert organisation name] uses risk assessment processes to identify and control barriers to effective emergency management.

Staff, Board members, students, volunteers and consumers are expected to behave in a way to minimise the risk of emergencies occurring.

8.2   Preparedness

The Emergency Situation Checklist supports the organisation to prepare for potential disaster and emergency situations, and is reviewed on **[insert frequency]** basis. Disaster and emergency management plans are reviewed **[insert frequency]** basis.

All staff, Board members, students and volunteers are provided with training to ensure they are familiar with implementation of disaster and emergency management plans.

All staff, Board members, students and volunteers familiarise themselves with emergency evacuation procedures, including their responsibilities and the emergency evacuation assembly point.

All fire safety activities undertaken by the organisation are recorded and reviewed to identify gaps in training, knowledge, equipment or processes. Fire activities include, but are not limited to, fire safety training, drills and exercises, records of maintenance and inventories of equipment kept.

Where relevant, all staff, students and volunteers familiarise themselves with techniques to minimise physical and emotional harm from other people.

8.3   Response

When a disaster or emergency situation arises, the primary aim of the response is to ensure the safety of all people on the premises, preserve life and protect property.

Procedures for responding to fire, hold-up, bomb threat, flood, earthquake and suspicious mail are outlined in the Emergency and Disaster Situation Procedures.

Where evacuation is warranted, refer to guidelines outlined in Emergency and Disaster Situation Procedures.

[insert organisation name] initiates recovery and aims to restore operations as quickly as possible.

The availability of critical incident debriefing is an essential component of the organisation's approach to emergency management.

When required, supportive counselling is provided to consumers, staff, volunteers, students and board members who are affected by an emergency or critical incident within two hours of the event (for defusing and mobilisation) and then within 48 to 72 hours (for critical incident debriefing).

9.   References + Resources

9.1   Internal

Critical Incident report Form
Emergency Situation Checklist

Emergency and Disaster Situation Procedures
Work Health and Safety Policy
Risk Management Policy

9.2   External

Legislation
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
Model Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth)
Workers Compensation Act 1987 (NSW)
Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 (NSW)
Workers Compensation Regulation 2010 (NSW)

Resources
WorkCover NSW 2004*, The Community Services Safety Pack: A Guide to Occupational Health & Safety. Gosford, NSW.*

WorkCover Authority of NSW website:
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

This policy is based on the NADA Disaster and Emergency Management Policy.
http://www.nada.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=236&Itemid=44

9.3   Quality and Accreditation Standards

EQuIP4
Provided by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS)

Standard 3.2: The organisation maintains a safe environment for employees, consumers/patients and visitors.

Criterion 3.2.4: Emergency and disaster management supports safe practice and a safe environment.

EQuIP5
Provided by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS)

Standard 3.2: The organisation maintains a safe environment for employees, consumers/patients and visitors.

Criterion 3.2.4: Emergency and disaster management supports safe practice and a safe environment.

Health and Community Service Standards (6th edition)
Provided by Quality Improvement Council Quality (QIC)

Standard 1.7: The organisation identifies, assesses and manages risks to ensure continuous, safe, responsive and efficient services.

Evidence Question: What is the evidence that:
a) the organisation understands that risk has dimensions that include strategic, governance, operational, property, financial and clinical risks?
b) the organisation compiles with the legislative context in which it operates and which defines relevant risks?
c) there are planned and systematic ways of collecting and analysing data that address potential and actual risks to the organisation as a whole and to the services it provides?
d) procedures are implemented to manage and respond to risks in a timely way?

9.4   National Mental Health Standards

Criterion 8.8 The organisation has a policy and process to support staff during and after critical incidents.

9.5   Recovery Oriented Service Self-Assessment Tool (ROSSAT)

Evidence items are:

Item 1.2i: The organisation has a policy and process to support consumers and workers during and after critical incidents. Workers are aware of this process.

9.6 NSW Disability Services Standards (DSS)
N/A