

INCIDENT REPORTING AND RESPONSE

Policy Declaration

Prahran Place is equipped to identify, plan for and respond to incidents impacting the wellbeing of individuals or our organisation. The purpose of this policy is to ensure Prahran Place utilises a consistent and coordinated approach to incident management which meets our legal requirements, as well as allows the organisation to learn from mistakes and near misses.

Policy Description

Application:

This policy applies to all Prahran Place staff, volunteers and members of Prahran Place CoM.

Background:

Prahran Place implements strategies to avoid or mitigate the impact of incidents through safety awareness, education and training, as well as through regularly reviewed policies and procedures, refer to the related policies and procedures list.

Objectives:

Incidents, no matter how small, must be recognised, responded to and documented in order for our organisation to strengthen and grow.

Broadly, incidents are events which could result in a breach of organisational policy and/or impact the health and wellbeing of an individual or the organisation to the degree a response is required. Incident categories include:

Category	Symptoms
Unacceptable behaviour:	Abusive, violent or intimidating actions or language used by a community member, staff (including contractors), volunteer, student, participant, or CoM member in the organisation.
IT Systems Security Event:	IT incident likely to have an ongoing impact on the organisation such as privacy breach or cyber security event.
Personal Security Event:	Serious injury/illness, assault, sexual assault, theft, suicide, attempted suicide, homicide, lost/missing student, epidemic, serious student or staff misconduct, or drug or alcohol abuse when impacting on academic performance or conduct.
Legislative compliance breach:	Statutory or regulatory, e.g. discrimination and harassment, ethics, integrity, OHS, financial, health.
Physical / infrastructure security event:	Vandalism, building fire, explosion, bomb threat, arson, traffic accident, accidental property damage.
Natural disaster:	Flood, cyclone, storm, high winds, bushfire, earthquake, or any natural disaster likely to cause major damage to property, threaten personal safety, or cause inability for the majority of staff to attend to normal operations.
Environmental:	Chemical, biological, radiological, hazardous material.

Understanding the origins and elements of incidents is essential and therefore the following principles guide Prahran Place incident management response:

- **Openness about failures** – incidents are reported, and the incident acknowledged without fear of inappropriate blame.
- **Emphasis on learning** – Prahran Place focuses on learning from mistakes and near misses. Prahran Place employs a culture of continuous improvement.

- **Appropriate action** – Prahran Place will take action to remedy problems, prioritising and resourcing actions where greatest improvements are possible.
- **Accountability** – individuals understand they may be held accountable for their actions.
- **Just culture** – individuals are treated fairly.
- **Cooperation, collaboration and communication** – teamwork is recognised as the best defence. Prahran Place fosters a culture of trust and mutual respect.

Prahran Place management of incidents and issues requires their prompt communication to the PEO. Prahran Place staff and volunteers are encouraged to report all incidents, no matter how small, including ‘near misses’ when an incident might have occurred. All staff and volunteers are responsible for commencing or participating in incident reporting and response as their training and abilities allow.

Critical Incidents

A Critical Incident is a crisis, which has a stressful impact, overwhelming the usually effective coping skills of an individual or group. Critical incidents are usually outside the range of ordinary experiences and may have a strong impact on the individual or group and must be reported to a government agency or department.

If not responded to effectively, critical incidents may lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Prahran Place is committed to swift and effective response to support individuals impacted by these events. Critical Incidents are required to be reported to DFFH under the NHCP Guideline via the Critical Incident Reporting Form In some instances, they may also be required to be reported to a government agency or department under Public Health Directions.

Critical Incidents are defined as:

- **Category 1** – the most serious Incidents – such as death or severe trauma - and occur at the service or during service delivery.
 - Recommended report within 1 working day.
- **Category 2** – Incidents involving events threatening the health, safety and or wellbeing of users or staff.
 - Recommended report within 2 working days.

Related Policies and Procedures:

- Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy
- Workplace Behaviour Policy
- Induction Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Event Management Policy
- Feedback Policy
- Motor Vehicle Policy
- Emergency Management Policy
- Fraud Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Safe Workplace Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Handling Child Complaints Policy
- Grievance Resolution Policy
- Disciplinary and Performance Management Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Strategy, Business and Risk Management Policy
- Staff and Volunteer Exit Policy
- CoM Resignation or Removal Policy

Related Documents:

- WorkSafe Reporting Form
- Critical Incident Reporting Form
- Incident Report Form
- Incident Register
- Feedback Form
- Feedback Register

3.9.1 Incident Reporting and Response Procedures

An incident may be managed during the normal course of Prahran Place business, may not require completion of the Incident Report Form and is managed by the PEO and staff using normal processes and procedures.

Where an incident involves staff or CoM Members, the PEO, or if the PEO is affected the Chair, will be responsible to decide whether individuals should leave Prahran Place for the remainder of the day, or if their emergency contact person will be called to provide support. In some situations, incidents involving staff may require implementation of disciplinary action, as per the Performance Management Policy. Extreme incidents may involve immediately implementing dismissal processes for staff members or removal of CoM members from the CoM.

An Incident Report Form must be completed for any incident which demonstrates or highlights gaps and/or areas for improvement in planning, procedures, communication strategies or is a serious breach of policy. The Incident Report Form incorporates feedback gathered from those present at the incident and other people impacted by the incident.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act), there is mandatory reporting by employers to notify WorkSafe immediately after becoming aware of a workplace safety incident. Failure to report an incident, including death, fractures, and immediate hospitalisation to WorkSafe is an offence and may result in prosecution. A detailed list of mandatory reporting incidents is located on the WorkSafe website.

Under the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, a Serious Incident Report must be completed for all clients that are participating in social group activities at Prahran Place under My Aged Care. The PEO will report all reportable incidents to the Commission.

The PEO will notify the Prahran Place insurance brokers and insurers when an allegation of child abuse is raised as soon as Prahran Place becomes aware of it.

5. Incomplete record keeping on staff training

Incident Reports and the Prahran Place response will be documented and recorded in the Incident Register. The Incident Register will be reviewed by the CoM at each general meeting.

DFFH Critical Incident Response

1. Immediate Response.

Staff and PEO should take required action, without putting themselves in danger, to:

- Minimise the immediate effects of an incident.
- Follow safety procedures to make the area safe.
- Arrange any necessary first aid treatment either by taking any injured persons to first aid facilities or arranging trained first aiders to attend to any injured persons.
- Call police, ambulance and / or medical assistance where required.
- Preserve the area, ensuring evidence is not destroyed prior to the investigation.

The PEO is required to notify the CoM Chair of a Critical Incident as soon as practicably possible.

The PEO or Chair is required to notify DFFH regional office and Worksafe (as required) and commence Critical Incident Reporting as soon as practicably possible.

The PEO or Chair is required to report a reportable incidents under the Serious Incident Response Scheme to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission if the incident involves a My Aged Care client who is participating in a Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

2. Supporting impacted people.

The PEO, or if the PEO was involved and affected by the incident, the Chair, is responsible for coordinating support strategies following a critical incident.

Strategies include:

- Convene a meeting for those involved as soon as possible.
- Summarise the incident and clarify uncertainties.
- Invite questions and discuss issues of concern.
- Show care and support.
- Draw up a plan of action, taking into account the needs of the workers.
- Make short-term arrangements for work responsibilities.
- Offer information on defusing and debriefing.

3. Defusing the event.

Defusing is designed to bring the experience of the incident to a conclusion and provide immediate personal support and it should be provided by an unaffected member of staff who has the appropriate skills to deliver it. If nobody meets these requirements an external facilitator will be engaged.

The aim is to stabilise the responses of those involved in the incident and allow an opportunity for them to express immediate concerns. This step should take place within 12 hours of the incident. Strategies include:

- Review the event
- Clarify workers' questions and concerns
- Encourage workers to talk about what happened
- Identify current needs
- Offer workers advice, information, and handouts on referrals and support agencies
- Arrange debriefing and follow-up sessions if required

4. Debriefing.

Debriefing is not counselling; it is a structured voluntary discussion aimed at putting an abnormal event into perspective. It offers workers clarity about the critical incident they have experienced and assists them to establish a process for recovery.

The debriefing should be carried out as soon as possible after the event. All those directly involved in a critical incident should be strongly urged to attend. The location should be comfortable, safe and central. The settings should ensure confidentiality. Arrangements should be made to have online options for the meeting if deemed suitable.

Trained de-briefers and support staff should conduct debriefing sessions where possible to help staff to explore and understand a range of issues, including:

- The sequence of events.
- The causes and consequences.
- Each person's experience.
- Any memories triggered by the incident.
- Normal psychological reactions to critical incidents.

- Methods to manage emotional responses resulting from a critical incident.
- An awareness of any legal issues.
- Evaluation of the debriefing session.

5. Ongoing monitoring and support.

With appropriate and responsive critical incident processes, the people affected will be able to integrate the information and in time recover without symptoms. The PEO and staff need to be alert to each other and watch for signs being exhibited by staff immediately after an event, or over a period of days or weeks.

Some signs to watch out for include when a person:

- Avoids reminders of the incident or is unable to stop talking about it.
- May have increased arousal, restlessness, fatigue, flashbacks, inappropriate emotions, loss of interest in work.
- Values may change, they avoid people, or they become pessimistic or bitter.
- Has a preoccupation with the incident, even saying 'it's part of the job' while denying the effects.

Where critical incident stress is observed the person affected will be supported to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) The EAP is provided to Prahran Place staff through its membership of NHV Assist which may be accessed via <https://www.nhvassist.com/eap>