

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy #01.09

Policy Area: Quality and Risk Management

This Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (AFTT) policy provides guidance regarding the management of critical incidents witnessed and/or sustained by students or staff.

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all AFTT staff, students and visitors who have been exposed to a critical incident - either on-campus or off-campus (students and staff) including staff on business-related travel interstate or overseas.
- 1.2 Where AFTT staff witness an event that may be considered a critical incident, the policy and procedure should be followed.
- 1.3 Where AFTT staff is aware of an event which may either indicate or escalate to a critical incident, the policy and procedures should be followed.

2. Policy Statement

AFTT is committed to the health and safety of our students and staff, with a strong focus on risk management and the prevention of workplace incidents.

AFTT seeks to:

- take all reasonable steps in order to minimise harm in the learning environment;
- support strategies to minimise the occurrence of critical incidents;
- provide appropriate information and referral to counselling services to those affected by a critical incident;
- provide reasonable and appropriate training and information resources for staff.

3. Definitions

Critical incident: Any extraordinary and unpredicted traumatic event affecting an individual that requires the implementation of special arrangements involving a number of areas of the institute in order to prevent/minimise any negative impact on their health and welfare.

Critical incidents include but are not limited to:

- Medical emergencies involving a student
- Critical illness of a student
- Student death/suicide
- Traumatic events that affect students; such as
 - Sexual Assault
 - Mental Health Crisis
 - Drug / Alcohol Overdose

- Campus Disturbance / Riot
- Fire / Explosion with Injuries or Significant Damage
- Natural Disasters (in Australia and overseas)
- Airplane Crashes
- International Hostage Situations/ Kidnappings
- National Emergencies
- Hate/Bias Incidents

Dangerous Incident: Any incident in relation to a workplace that exposes a worker or any other person to a serious risk resulting from an immediate or imminent exposure to:

- an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance
- an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire
- an uncontrolled escape of gas or steam
- an uncontrolled escape of a pressurised substance
- electric shock
- the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing
- the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant that is required to be design or item registered under the Work Health and Safety Regulations
- the collapse or partial collapse of a structure
- the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation
- the inrush of water, mud or gas in workings, in an underground excavation or tunnel, or
- the interruption of the main system of ventilation in an underground excavation or tunnel.

3. Notifiable Incidents (to WorkCover NSW)

The Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) Act details the types of work-related incidents notifiable to WorkCover NSW as follows:

- death of a person
- 'serious injury or illness'
- dangerous incident

The WHS Act requires:

- immediate notification of a 'notifiable incident' to the regulator after becoming aware of it
- if the regulator asks - written notification with 48 hours of the request, and
- preservation of the incident site until an inspector arrives or directs otherwise (subject to some exceptions).

Contact WorkCover NSW on 13 10 50 to notify an incident. Failing to notify is a criminal offence and penalties apply. Refer to: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

For more information, read NSW Workcover's ***WHS Incident Notification: Fact Sheet*** at <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/media/publications/health-and-safety/whs-incident-notification-fact-sheet>

4. AFTT Incident Reporting Procedure

All incidents must be reported to an AFTT First Aid Officer, Course Manager (Acting) or Head of Production (Film) who will notify the Campus Manager.

The Campus Manager is responsible for disseminating information to appropriate people within AFTT and responding to any special needs that might emerge.

4.1 On-site incident

If the incident occurs on site at the AFTT campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the AFTT First Aid Officer and/or Campus Manager. They will be responsible for coordinating the necessary action following an incident and will determine the appropriate action.

4.2 Off-site Incident

If the incident involves a student or staff member and is off-site (for example, at a shoot location or theatre venue), the person receiving the information must immediately contact the AFTT First Aid Officer, Film Head of Production, Acting Department Course Manager or Campus Manager, who will advise the necessary action and will communicate with other staff/students as appropriate.

4.3 Incident details to be recorded

An Incident Report Form must be completed by the person reporting the incident and given to the AFTT First Aid Officer or Campus Manager within 24 hours. The form is available on the AFTT website, www.aftt.edu.au, or from Reception or the AFTT First Aid Officer.

Incident details to report include, but are not limited to:

- time
- location
- nature of the incident (e.g. threat, accident, injury or death)
- names and roles of persons involved (e.g. staff members, international or domestic student, visitors, general public)

The incident is recorded on the Incidents Register. Completed Incident Forms are stored on the relevant students/staff file.

4.4 Contact Details

During School Hours		
AFTT First Aid Officer	Christophe Healy	0415 804 950
Reception	Sam or Alysha	02 9281 2400
Campus Manager	Katrina Yeo	02 9281 2400
After Hours Emergency Contact		
Head of Production	Andrew Williams	0408 242 215

5. AFTT Procedure for Managing Critical Incidents

- 5.1 AFTT is advised of a critical incident. The Campus Manager is usually the first point of contact.
- 5.2 The Campus Manager makes a decision on 'critical incident', that is, does the event meet the critical incident definition?
- If yes, the Campus Manager convenes the *Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)*
 - If no, advises on appropriate course of action
- 5.3 The CIRT is chaired by the Campus Manager and membership can include:
- Safety Officers
 - Course Managers
 - Compliance Manager
 - Administration Co-ordinator
 - Counsellor, and
 - Nominated trained staff member(s)/or agency
- 5.4 The role of the CIRT is to effectively manage critical incidents with clear actions and procedures that are humane, sensitive, and responsive to the needs of students, staff and the broader institute community. Intervention procedures may reduce the intense reactions of students and staff to an incident and assist them in returning to their normal studies and/or duties.
- 5.5 The operations of the CIRT involve activities prior to, during and after periods impacted upon by the critical incident, and include:
- Preparing/informing students and staff on actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident
 - Initial Action
 - Stabilising the AFTT community
 - Debriefing
 - Personal support
 - Media management
 - Corporate review
 - Reports and Records management
- 5.6 CIRT role in preparing students and staff for a possible critical incident
The role of the CIRT includes:
- Informing AFTT students and staff of the role and activities of the CIRT
 - Assisting/advising on the development of positive working relationships and morale across the institute
 - Establishing contacts with and/or developing suitably trained internal or external debriefers
 - Assessing the institute environment for the potential for critical incidents
 - In consultation with students and staff, developing agreed procedures for responding to critical incidents:
 - Medical emergencies involving a student

- Critical illness of a student
- Student death
- Traumatic events that affect students
- Ensuring that students and staff are familiar with these procedures.

5.7 CIRT initial action

Critical incidents may trigger a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms, including increased heart rate, high blood pressure and anxiety. AFTT's initial action is to calm students and staff following a critical incident and to ensure that their immediate needs are met. A member of the CIRT, who was not involved in the incident, or affected by it, is responsible for this initial action.

A demobilisation takes place before the end of a shift or before those involved in the incident disperse. Strategies include:

- Contact emergency services if necessary
- 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 students/staff
- Make short-term arrangements for study/work responsibilities
- Offer information on defusing and debriefing

5.8 CIRT role in stabilizing the AFTT community

The role of stabilising the AFTT community is assigned to a trained person and is designed to bring the experience of the incident to a conclusion and provide immediate personal support. The aim is to stabilise the responses of students/staff involved in the incident and allow an opportunity for them to express any immediate concerns. This step should take place within 12 hours of the incident. Strategies include:

- Review the event
- Clarify student/staff questions and concerns
- Encourage student/staff to talk about what happened
- Identify current needs
- Offer student/staff advice, information and handouts on referrals and support agencies
- Arrange debriefing and follow-up sessions to provide additional information about the event when available

5.9 Incident involving or directly impacting an overseas student

If an overseas student is directly involved in a critical incident and the CIRT determines that **the student's family must be notified**:

- The Campus Manager or delegate will contact **the student's nominated** emergency contact person or next of kin.
- The Campus Manager will then contact the Embassy of the student's home country and other relevant people, such as the Homestay or accommodation provider.

- In the case of an overseas student's death, or an absence affecting attendance, the incident is reported through PRISMS to the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training (DET, www.education.gov.au) and Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP, www.border.gov.au).

5.10 CIRT role in debriefing

Debriefing is usually carried out within three to seven days of the critical incident, when students and staff have had enough time to take in the experience. Debriefing is not counselling. It is a structured voluntary discussion aimed at putting an abnormal event into perspective. It offers students/staff clarity about the critical incident they have experienced and assists them to establish a process for recovery.

Debriefers help the students and 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

5.11 CIRT role in personal support

An immediate and primary role of the CIRT is to determine how the institute can support the individual student(s) and their families involved in the incident. The Campus Manager manages all agreed communications and support mechanisms with affected students and their families. The CIRT through the student support services officer arranges for particular students most closely related to the student(s) involved in the incident to receive personal support.

5.12 CIRT role in media management

All media enquiries, press releases and institute website postings related to the critical incident are managed by the CIRT.

The Campus Manager or Marketing Director will be the only people approved by the CIRT to deal with communications with the media.

The CIRT has a responsibility to impress upon students and staff that there may be pressure on students and staff to provide photos to the media. Out of respect for the students/staff and their families and to protect the integrity of the institute, no photos other than those approved by the CIRT should be released to the media.

5.13 CIRT role in the corporate review

A corporate review is held a few weeks after the incident by members of the Senior Management Committee. The CIRT reviews all aspects of the incident to uncover deficiencies in the handling of the incident, and provide corrective solutions and reports to the Senior Management Committee. The review looks at how the incident was handled, how it could have been handled better and the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. Related AFTT policies and procedures are also reviewed.

5.14 CIRT role in reporting and records management

The Campus Manager has the responsibility for ensuring that:

- Minutes and agendas of ongoing CIRT meetings are maintained
- A file is raised each time the CIRT is convened to deal with a specific critical incident. This file (electronic and/or hardcopy) includes but is not limited to records of:
 - The incident:
 - The nature of the incident
 - The people involved in the incident
 - How AFTT became aware of the incident
 - Student support measures;
 - Communications with:
 - external bodies (Police/Emergency Services/DET /DIBP/ACPET, embassy etc),
 - media outlets and
 - particularly, members of students families;
- Reports from:
 - defusing and
 - debriefing sessions;
- Action plans
- Corporate review report
- Subsequent amendments to AFTT policies and procedures

6. Publication

This policy and procedure is available to students and staff on the AFTT website, www.aftt.edu.au, or a copy may be requested from Reception.

Students are made aware of this policy and procedure at the Orientation Day at the start of each semester. Staff receive a copy and briefing at their induction.

If this policy and/or procedure changes over time, students and staff will be notified via an email update.

7 Standards Alignment

This policy complies with the requirements of the following RTO standards:

7.1 Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015

Standard 8.5: The RTO complies with Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation and regulatory requirements relevant to its operations.

7.2 ESOS National Code Part D

Standard 6.4: The registered provider must have a documented critical incident policy together with procedures that covers the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, required follow-up to the incident, and records of the incident and action taken.

8. Positions Responsible

- Tutors
- First Aid Officers
- Head of Production
- Course Managers
- Campus Manager

9. Approval

This policy update was approved by the CEO on 14 March 2016.