



# **CANBERRA VALLEY INSTITUTE**

## **Document: Critical Incident Policy and Procedure**

*(Aligned to RTO Standards 2025)*

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### **Critical Incident Policy and Procedure**



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### **Critical Incident Policy and Procedure**

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## 1. Overview

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the RTO complies with relevant legislation, specifically Standard 3 of the RTO Standards 2025. Additionally, Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) aims to maintain appropriate policies and procedures to manage any critical incidents affecting its enrolled international students.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All learners studying at Canberra Valley Institute (CVI).
- All staff members.

## 4. Definitions

Critical Incident - The National Code defines a critical incident as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'. An international student means an international student or an intending international student holding a student visa under the Migration Act 1958.

Critical incidents include, but are not limited to:

- A fatality, being near a fatality, or an incident that is likely to affect several staff members and/or a student.
- Missing student.
- Serious traffic accidents.
- Murder or suicide involving students/staff and their family members or close friends (or being a witness to), Physical or sexual assault.
- Injury or death of a colleague, carer, or intimate friend.
- Fire, explosion, bomb threat.
- Chemical, radiation, or biohazard spillage.
- Hold-up or attempted robbery.
- Threats of violence to staff/students.
- Major theft or vandalism.
- Threat of HIV infection.
- Storms/natural disasters.
- Acute illness (physical or mental); and/or Security incident.
- Home Country
- Missing relatives, especially parents or siblings

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- Natural disaster
- Political change
- Acts of war or other conflict
- Religious persecution

### 3. Policy Statement

Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) acknowledges that adequate procedures are essential to provide necessary support services in the event of a critical incident. This document details the Institute's policy, support systems, and methods for managing such incidents.

This policy will ensure that Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) has:

- a practical, evidence-based approach to responding to critical incidents as they occur.
- Makes appropriate support and counselling services available to those affected; and
- Makes available appropriate training and information resources to all relevant staff.

#### 4.1 Procedures

Risk reduction measures. Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) will ensure that critical incidents are minimized through:

- Ensuring this policy and critical incident procedures are communicated to all staff and students at Canberra Valley Institute (CVI).
- Providing staff and students with information to promote safety awareness, risk prevention, and prompt response to potential threats.
- Requiring staff to report safety concerns to the Student Support Officer or the CEO Team, or by completing a hazard/incident form. The Student Support Officer will document, assess, and address the risk. Students should report concerns to any staff member, who will complete the form on their behalf.
- Conducting regular emergency management training, including responses to critical incidents.
- Maintaining at least two staff members trained in First Aid and two designated as Fire Wardens or part of the Critical Incident Team. In the event of a critical incident, the CEO and Student Support Manager will convene a Critical Incident Team, including members of the Management Team and relevant external parties.

The Critical Incident Team is responsible for:

- Assessing risks and response actions.
- Liaison with emergency and other services.

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- Contact with students' relatives and other appropriate contacts.
- Counselling and managing students and/or staff not directly involved in the incident; and
- Referring and managing students/staff directly involved in the incident to relevant professionals where needed.

The Critical Incident Management Team will meet monthly to review any incidents that occurred during the month. Where no incidents have occurred under this policy in the preceding (1) month, the Critical Incident Team should refer to the Emergency Evacuation procedures and any WHS training and/or drills conducted.

**On-campus Incidents:** If the Critical Incident Team determines that emergency services such as the fire brigade, ambulance, or police are needed, the Critical Response Coordinator will arrange their attendance. The first staff member on call or on the scene must notify the CEO immediately if the incident involves death, serious injury, or a threat to life or property. **Off-campus Incidents:** If a critical incident involving a student or staff member occurs off-campus, the person receiving the report must immediately inform the CEO, who will then notify other relevant staff as needed. **Immediate Response:** In situations where life or property is at risk.

- Any actual or potential incident should be reported immediately to Emergency Services (Fire, Police, Ambulance) and Security.
- Evacuation procedures should be implemented, if necessary, before contacting Emergency Services.
- If the incident does not require immediate emergency response, the CEO must be notified immediately with full details, including the exact location, type of incident, and information about any individuals who may be injured, distressed, or at risk. Upon arriving at the scene of a critical incident, the CEO is responsible for assessing the situation. If deemed a critical incident, the CEO will coordinate the overall response, with other staff members assisting as needed for specific tasks. The staff member first on the scene must contact the CEO or, if unable to do so, delegate this responsibility so they can remain at the incident site.

## 4.2 Reporting

- If an incident could impact a student's visa conditions or program of study, Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) will notify the Department of Education as soon as possible.
- In the event of a student's death or serious injury, the Institute will communicate with the student's family and provide necessary support, while also informing all relevant and authorised parties.
- The CEO will conduct a review and evaluation of the critical incident response to assess

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its effectiveness and identify measures to reduce future risks.

#### 4.3 Procedure to Guide the Coordinating Team

The staff member receiving the news contacts the CEO.

The CEO or their nominee urgently addresses the emergency, then calls a meeting with the staff (Critical Incident Team) involved to decide how to proceed.

The staff most likely to be present will be:

- CEO.
- Student Support Services Officer.

At the initial meeting, the group is required to:

- Identify all persons affected by the critical incident (both directly and indirectly);
- Create a clear understanding of the known facts.

Plan an immediate response:

- Initiate pastoral care:
- Personal contact is to be made with individuals, including victims and other persons affected by the incident.
- Provision of a quiet area
- A quiet area is to be established for the use of victims and/or their families. This area shall be protected from intrusion by anyone not immediately affected by the incident.
- Brief staff and delegate a staff member to deal with telephone/counter enquiries; and
- Confirm access to emergency funds if necessary.
- Plan ongoing management strategies
- Monitor the need for counselling.
- Initiate and maintain contact with those affected by the incident.
- Provide those affected by the incident with educational material covering common responses to trauma and strategies for coping with these effects.
- Assess the need for and organise debriefing sessions for all those involved in the incident.
- A written bulletin to staff if the matter is complex.
- Allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks. One member of the team will be delegated the task of taking minutes for all meetings, recording all actions and decisions. These minutes and any related documents must be provided to the CEO at the earliest opportunity to assist with enquiries from police, emergency services, legal authorities, insurance companies, etc.

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Stress management support will be provided after any critical incident as follows:

- All staff and students affected by a critical incident must be debriefed as soon as possible, either individually or in groups.
- Additional group debriefing sessions will be conducted one or more days after the incident, with individual sessions arranged if needed. These must be scheduled before the end of Day 1.
- Follow-up debriefing will occur 2–6 weeks later, primarily in groups, with individual sessions provided as required. Planning should be completed by the end of Week 1 following the incident.
- Ongoing counselling will be available for staff and students on an individual or group basis, as needed.
- Staff and students involved will be given recovery time, guided by professional advice.
- If deemed necessary by the CEO, support may also be provided on the anniversary of the incident, either individually or in groups, based on professional guidance.
- Counselling will be prioritised for incidents involving potential trauma.
- Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) will engage a qualified counselling service to support staff and students and provide further individual counselling sessions at the Institute's expense if required.
- Crisis leave or temporary suspension of studies may be considered, with PRISMS updated to reflect any changes to enrolment.
- After the emergency response, the CEO will assess whether legal assistance is necessary and engage legal support if required.

#### 4.4 Insurance

In cases where there is damage to buildings or grounds, or where Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) may be liable for personal or property damage, the relevant insurance providers should be notified promptly. Insurers will typically arrange repairs if the damage is covered under the policy.

Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) maintains current Third-Party Liability (public and product liability) insurance policies. If a critical incident affects students, the OSHC provider should be notified to assist with any student claims. The Critical Incident Management Team will convene within one month of the incident to review the response and procedures. Policies may be updated based on this evaluation to ensure continuous improvement.

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#### 4.5 Emergency Services

Police, Fire & Ambulance: 000 ACT Emergency Services: Emergency contacts | ACT Emergency Services Agency

There are two numbers to call for ambulance assistance:

- Emergency triple zero (000) for an emergency; and
- Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPT) bookings (02) 6200 4126 (Booking requires authorisation from a medical officer)

### 5. Responsible Person

- CEO / RTO Manager
- Student Support Officer

### 6. Related Documents

- Hazard/incident form

### 7. Review of Policy

Canberra Valley Institute (CVI) will review the *Critical Incident Policy and Procedure* annually or on a needs basis (whichever occurs first).