

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: Strategic Leadership Team	PASSED: 23 July 2015
TOPIC: Health and Safety	AMENDED:
	REVIEW PERIOD: As required.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The Library values its employees and is committed to providing employees with professional assistance should they be involved during their workday with a traumatic or critical incident. Support available includes an employee and family assistance program (EFAP) and additional strategies to defuse, debrief, critique and review the incident.

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

A workplace critical incident is an event—like an injury, fatality, or robbery—that causes emotional or psychological trauma in people exposed to the incident directly, or indirectly. It is a sudden, powerful event outside the range of normal experience—and outside of the worker's control.

PROCEDURE

Should an employee(s) be directly involved during their workday in the following traumatic incidents, the employee’s manager should notify Human Resources immediately:

- Death or life-threatening injury of a Library employee or member of the public as a result of a workplace accident or incidence of violence in the workplace
- Any incident with profound emotional consequences (robbery, hostage situation)
- Major and/or multiple trauma injuries
- Incident of sexual harassment or
- Violence among workers resulting in physical or emotional injury

Should an employee or manager be in doubt with respect to intervention or have any questions, they shall immediately contact Human Resources.

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTIONS

Critical incident response may reduce the intense reactions of workers to an incident and assist them in returning to their duties. The Manager in consultation with Human Resources will determine appropriate intervention which may include one or the more of the following:

Defusing session

Held **within 6 to 8 hours** of the incident, a defusing session is a brief confidential, non-judgmental group meeting of workers affected by the incident. It is critical to have experienced people specially trained to conduct a defusing session; this can include trained peers. The defuser explains the physical, emotional

and mental reactions that workers may be experiencing, and how to take care of their emotional and physical health.

Debriefing session

A debriefing session is ideally held **within 24 to 72** hours after an incident. It is a confidential, non-judgmental discussion of the continuing effects of a traumatic incident on workers. The purpose of this session is to alleviate the trauma of affected workers, and to assist in the recovery process. Debriefing focuses on the emotional well-being of workers – it does not attempt to find the cause of the accident or assign blame. Sessions should be led by trained professionals and participation is voluntary.

Critiquing session

A critiquing session is held **a few weeks after** the incident. Employers, supervisors, and workers review all aspects of the incident to uncover deficiencies in the handling of the incident, and provide corrective solutions. The session looks at how the incident was handled, how it could have been handled better, how it could have been prevented, and the effectiveness of the intervention. Related Library policies, safety regulations, safe work procedures are also reviewed.

Corporate review

Within **30 days of an incident**, the employer conducts a broad review of all steps taken in response to the incident, including:

- First aid
- Emergency procedures
- Critical incident debriefing
- Accident investigation
- Corrective responses
- Claims management

The purpose of a corporate review is to assess the effectiveness of the Library's procedures, how the Library responded, and suggest other corrective steps that should be put in place. This does not replace an accident investigation.

EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP)

The EFAP provides for assessment, referral, short-term counselling and aftercare services for employees who request professional counselling. Another component of the EFAP provides for Critical Incident Stress Management which deals with professional intervention, mandatory or optional for employees who become involved in a traumatic or violent incident while on the job.

WORKSAFEBC'S CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING PROGRAM (CIR)

In the event the Library experiences a critical incident WorkSafeBC offers an additional resource of the CIR Program. For support or information about the service, please page the **CIR Program at 1 888 922-3700** between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m., seven days a week. WorkSafeBC's CIR program is available up to three weeks from the date of the critical incident. It is a free, confidential, and voluntary service.