

# MITP14 – CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## *Policy Summary for Students*

### **PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy explains how Menzies Institute of Technology responds to critical incidents – serious events that could affect your safety, wellbeing, or ability to study. It ensures you know what support is available during emergencies, how the Institute will respond to protect you, and what steps are taken to help everyone recover after an incident.

### **KEY SECTIONS OF THE POLICY**

#### **What is a Critical Incident?**

**A critical incident is any event that poses actual or potential risk to the safety, wellbeing, or educational outcomes of students, staff, or the community. Critical incidents can include:**

**Medical Emergencies:** Serious illness, injury, or medical crisis requiring immediate attention.

**Safety Threats:** Violence, assault, threats to personal safety, or dangerous situations on campus or during Institute activities.

**Natural Disasters:** Bushfires, floods, earthquakes, extreme weather events, or other environmental emergencies.

**Mental Health Crises:** Suicide attempts, severe psychological distress, self-harm incidents, or situations where someone may harm themselves or others.

**Accidents:** Serious accidents on campus, during work placements, or during Institute-organized activities.

**Missing Persons:** When a student or staff member cannot be located and there are serious concerns for their welfare.

**Facility Issues:** Building emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, or major infrastructure failures that affect safety.

**Public Health Emergencies:** Disease outbreaks, pandemics, or other health threats affecting the Institute community.

**Death or Serious Trauma:** Death of a student or staff member, or traumatic events affecting the Institute community.

## **Who This Policy Applies To**

This policy protects everyone connected to the Institute including all students (domestic and international, full-time and part-time), all staff (permanent, casual, contractors, volunteers), third-party service providers, visitors to Institute premises, and community members affected by Institute activities.

## **Institute Commitments**

The Institute is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment, responding effectively to incidents, providing appropriate support for those affected, minimizing disruption to your education, complying with all regulatory requirements, and continuously improving incident management based on lessons learned.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCESS**

### **Prevention and Preparedness (Before Incidents Occur)**

#### **The Institute works proactively to prevent incidents and prepare for effective responses:**

**Risk Assessment:** Regular identification and assessment of potential risks to student and staff safety.

**Safety Measures:** Implementation of security systems, emergency equipment, safe building design, work placement safety protocols, and health and safety procedures.

**Training:** All staff receive regular training on incident prevention, recognition, and initial response procedures.

**Student Information:** You receive comprehensive information about safety, wellbeing support services, and incident reporting procedures through orientation programs and ongoing communications.

**Emergency Contacts:** The Institute maintains up-to-date emergency contact information for all students. It's essential that you keep your emergency contact details current.

**Critical Incident Team:** A designated team is trained and ready to respond to incidents, including the CEO, Head of Student Services, Campus Manager, relevant department heads, and external support specialists as needed.

### **Immediate Response (When an Incident Occurs)**

- **Step 1: Ensure Immediate Safety (First 30 Minutes)**

**When a critical incident occurs or is reported, the immediate priority is safety:**

- Contact emergency services (000) if required
- Secure the affected area to prevent further harm
- Provide first aid or emergency care as needed
- Account for all students and staff in the affected area
- Move people to safety if necessary

- **Step 2: Activate Critical Incident Team**

Within 30 minutes of becoming aware of an incident, the Critical Incident Team is activated. The team assesses the situation, determines the severity and potential impact, identifies who is affected, coordinates the immediate response, and allocates roles and responsibilities.

- **Step 3: Initial Communications**

The Institute communicates with affected individuals and their families, emergency contacts as appropriate, relevant staff members, emergency services and external agencies, and regulatory bodies (for international students, this includes PRISMS reporting).

- **Step 4: Provide Immediate Support**

Immediate support is provided to those affected including on-site first aid or medical assistance, psychological first aid, safe accommodation if needed, practical assistance (food, transportation, essential items), and access to counselling services.

## **Ongoing Response and Recovery**

### **Support Services Available**

**After the immediate crisis, ongoing support continues for as long as needed:**

**Counselling Services:** Professional counselling for students affected by the incident, either directly or indirectly. This is confidential and free.

**Academic Support:** If the incident affects your studies, the Institute provides flexible assessment arrangements, extensions or deferrals as appropriate, catch-up support and tutoring, and course progress support.

**Practical Assistance:** Help with accommodation issues, financial hardship, visa matters (international students), or other practical concerns arising from the incident.

Peer Support: Facilitated peer support groups where appropriate, helping students support each other through difficult times.

Referrals: Connection to external support services including medical services, mental health professionals, legal assistance, or community support organizations.

### **Communication and Updates**

Throughout the incident response and recovery, the Institute provides regular updates to affected students and families about the situation, support available, and any changes to Institute operations. Communication respects privacy while keeping everyone appropriately informed.

### **Academic Continuity**

The Institute works to minimize disruption to your education by maintaining teaching and assessment where safe to do so, providing alternative delivery methods if campus access is limited, offering flexible attendance and assessment arrangements, and ensuring course progress is not unfairly affected by incident-related absences.

### **Documentation and Reporting**

All critical incidents are documented using the Critical Incident Action Plan (MFA93) and Critical Incident Report Template (MFA94). Records include description of the incident, response actions taken, support services provided, communications made, and follow-up plans. Records are maintained for minimum 2 years after resolution.

### **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

After every critical incident, the Institute conducts a post-incident evaluation within 2 weeks of resolution to identify what worked well, what could be improved, lessons learned, and recommendations for preventing similar incidents.

Improvements are implemented within 6 months.

## **KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER**

### **Your Safety is the Priority**

In any critical incident, your safety and wellbeing are the Institute's top concerns. Staff are trained to respond effectively and will provide clear instructions during emergencies. Follow staff directions during incidents.

### **Report Incidents Immediately**

If you witness or experience a critical incident, report it immediately by calling 000 for life-threatening emergencies, contacting any staff member on campus, calling Student Services at [Phone Number], or contacting the Campus Manager at [Phone Number].

After hours or off-campus, call emergency services (000) first, then contact the Institute's emergency number [After-hours Number].

### **Keep Emergency Contacts Current**

Make sure the Institute has your current residential address, mobile number, email address, and emergency contact person details. Update Student Services within 7 days if any of these change. This information could save your life in an emergency.

### **Support is Always Available**

Never hesitate to seek help if you're affected by an incident, even if you weren't directly involved. Witnessing traumatic events or supporting others through crises can affect your own wellbeing. Counselling and support services are free and confidential.

### **International Student Considerations**

If you're an international student, critical incidents may affect your visa or enrolment status. The Institute will notify the Department of Home Affairs through PRISMS as required by law, but will also work with you to ensure your visa status is protected where possible. Compassionate and compelling circumstances are taken into account for attendance and course progress requirements.

### **Mental Health Matters**

If you're experiencing mental health difficulties, suicidal thoughts, or severe distress, please reach out immediately. Contact Student Services, speak with a trusted staff member, call Lifeline (13 11 14), or go to your nearest hospital emergency department. You're not alone, and help is available 24/7.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Information about critical incidents is handled confidentially and shared only with those who need to know to provide support or ensure safety. Your privacy is protected under the Privacy Act 1988.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STAY SAFE**

### **Be Aware of Your Environment**

Know where emergency exits are located, understand emergency assembly points, be aware of safety and security measures on campus, and report any safety concerns to staff immediately.

### **Look After Your Wellbeing**

Maintain connection with friends, family, and support networks. Attend to your physical health with adequate sleep, nutrition, and exercise. Seek help early if you're struggling academically or personally. Use available support services – they're there for you.

### **During Work Placements**

Follow all workplace health and safety procedures. Report any unsafe situations to your placement supervisor and Institute staff. Know your placement site's emergency procedures. Keep the Institute informed of any incidents during placements.

### **Know What Support is Available**

Familiarize yourself with support services during orientation. Keep Student Services contact details in your phone. Don't wait until a crisis to find out what help is available. Ask questions if you're unsure about safety procedures.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Business Continuity**

The Institute has a Business Continuity Plan (MITP74-BCP) to ensure educational delivery can continue even during major disruptions. This might include alternative campus locations, online learning delivery, or modified schedules. You'll be informed of any changes resulting from critical incidents.

### **Staff Training and Competence**

All Institute staff complete regular training in critical incident recognition and response. Key staff members have advanced training in psychological first aid, emergency management, and trauma-informed care.

### **External Partnerships**

The Institute works with external agencies to provide comprehensive support including emergency services, healthcare providers, mental health services, police, Department of Home Affairs (for international students), community support organizations, and trauma counseling specialists.

### **Performance Monitoring**

The Institute monitors critical incident management effectiveness through response time targets (activate Critical Incident Team within 30 minutes), student satisfaction with support received (target >85%), staff confidence in procedures (target >90%), completion of post-incident evaluations (target 100% within 2 weeks), and implementation of improvements (target >90% within 6 months).

### **Annual Review**

This policy is reviewed annually and after any major incident that reveals gaps in procedures. Your feedback about incident management is valuable for continuous improvement.

## **Cultural Sensitivity**

The Institute recognizes that students from different cultural backgrounds may experience and respond to critical incidents differently. Support services are provided with cultural sensitivity and can include access to interpreters, cultural advisors, or community liaison officers as appropriate.

## **NEED HELP OR HAVE QUESTIONS?**

### **Emergency Numbers**

**Life-threatening emergency: 000 (Police, Fire, Ambulance)**

**Student Services Officer:** 1300 244 002, [academics@menzies.vic.edu.au](mailto:academics@menzies.vic.edu.au)

### **24/7 Support Services**

**Lifeline: 13 11 14**

**Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636**

**Kids Helpline (under 25): 1800 55 1800**

**Mental Health Crisis: 1800 629 354**

## **RELATED POLICIES YOU SHOULD KNOW**

- MITP20 – Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
- MITP28 – Student Support Services and Welfare Policy and Procedure
- MITP74-BCP – Business Continuity Plan
- MITP04 – Student Code of Conduct
- MITP07 – Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- MITP001 – Quality Governance and Accountability Framework

All policies are available on the Menzies Institute of Technology website or from Student Services.