CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Overview

This document is designed to address various types of critical incidents that may occur within Skyline Higher Education Australia ("SHEA"). Preparation for, response to, and recovery from a critical incident affecting the students, education, administrative, information or human resources of SHEA requires the cooperative efforts of all executive staff in partnership with the functional areas supporting the operations of SHEA.

The objectives of this Critical Incident Management Policy ("CIMP") are to make sufficient preparations for responding to a critical incident or emergency in order to minimise the effect upon the students, personnel and operations of the business.

Apart from an overarching responsibility of care to all students[1], management have a specific regulatory responsibility to respond to the needs of international students[2] in the case of a critical incident. Furthermore, any interruption to the normal operations of SHEA could be damaging to future relationships with students and other stakeholders (including regulators) and could affect SHEA's public image.

This CIMP is not designed to provide an answer to each and every type of critical incident that could happen, but rather is provided to identify the methods on how to manage a critical incident if one was to occur.

1. Background

Critical incidents are extraordinary events that because of their scope, intensity or duration, overwhelm an organisation's capacity to cope and maintain equilibrium. Critical incidents may be classified as natural; such as floods, bushfires, earthquakes, and storms; or human-caused, through deliberate attack on the people or resources of SHEA.

This CIMP also relates to the overall emergency plans of SHEA and aims to minimise the damage incurred during an emergency, by providing guidelines for a rapid and effective response to an emergency situation.

The CIMP is designed to complement procedures laid down elsewhere concerning providing a safe environment for students and staff, regular maintenance of buildings and facilities and evacuation procedures in case of emergency. Nothing in this policy is to be taken as contrary to guidelines and procedures laid down elsewhere concerning these matters. The policy assumes that:

- ✓ students are properly orientated in how to respond to a critical incident and what support is available to them;
- ✓ all SHEA's infrastructure is subject to regular maintenance (refer *Infrastructure and Resources Review and Improvement Policy and Procedure*);
- ✓ emergency exits are clearly marked and kept clear of obstacles at all times;
- ✓ fire prevention measures and protection equipment is in place (e.g. fire wardens appointed, smoke detectors, alarm systems and fire extinguishers are in place and maintained);

[1] Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 (HESF2021) Standard 2.3.5

[2] Standard 6.8 of the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* which requires SHEA to have and implement a documented policy and process for managing critical incidents that could affect an international student's ability to undertake or complete a course, such as but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm

- ✓ normal safe work practices are followed routinely and staff are familiar with fire drill and emergency evacuation procedures; and
- ✓ backups of computer records are stored in the cloud as per the *POL015 Records Management and Security Procedure.*

Examples of critical incidents that may affect students could include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ The death or critical injury of a staff member, student, close family member or other stakeholder.
- ✓ Attempted suicide of a student.
- ✓ Life-threatening illness/injury of a student or students.
- ✓ Sexual and/or physical assault of a student.
- ✓ Missing student.
- ✓ The destruction of whole or part of premises or infrastructure that SHEA utilises.
- ✓ The threat of damage to premises that SHEA occupies (e.g. a bomb threat).
- ✓ An extended ICT service outage.
- ✓ A break-in accompanied by major vandalism.
- ✓ Staff and/or students being taken hostage or killed/injured while engaged in an Institute-sponsored activity.
- ✓ A natural or other major disaster in the community.

SHEA will ensure that all students are made aware at orientation of:

- ✓ What to do in the case of a critical incident.
- ✓ The point of contact for any issues which require student support, including critical incidents.

SHEA will also ensure that where required, and as appropriate:

- ✓ As soon as practical after a critical incident occurs, the appropriate regulator(s) is/are notified about the details of the incident including the time, location and nature of the incident.
- ✓ In the case of an international student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance or course progress, the incident is reported via PRISMS.
- ✓ That the incident and its management are recorded on the affected students' files.

2. The Policy in Action

The emphasis of this CIMP is based on three major steps:

1. Reaction
2. Recovery and Restoration
3. Review

3.1 Reaction

3.1.1 Communication

In the case of a critical incident, it is important that key people are notified. In an emergency situation, the primary objective is the safety of human lives. Salvage and recovery operations will be of secondary importance, and will take place only when the affected area is declared safe.

When a critical incident occurs, notify the Registrar (or their alternate) and then the CEO. The contact details for the CEO and Registrar and their alternate(s) are detailed in *Appendix A*.

The Registrar (or their alternate) will be the Coordinator of the emergency response and will contact relevant emergency services or other personnel as required.

The CEO is designated as the principal contact with the media, regulatory agencies, government agencies, and other external organisations following the declaration of a critical business incident.

3.1.2 Immediate response to an incident

1. Notify the responsible persons as outlined above.
2. Immediately after notification of the incident, the following questions need to be addressed by the Coordinator:
   - ✓ What happened?
   - ✓ What makes the event critical?
   - ✓ When did the incident occur?
   - ✓ Where did it happen?
   - ✓ Who was involved?
   - ✓ Who needs assistance?
   - ✓ What is the most appropriate intervention?
3. If Emergency Support Services such as fire, ambulance or police are required, these can be contacted by dialling 000.
4. In the case that it is decided that evacuation is an appropriate intervention the evacuation plans included at *Appendix B* should be employed.

3.2 Recovery and Restoration

3.2.1 The timeframe for recovery:

The first 24 hours

- ✓ Gather accurate facts and information.
- ✓ If possible, re-establish a sense of routine within SHEA. Staff members and students will feel safe once the regular patterns of management and organisation have been re-established.

The first 48 – 72 hours

- ✓ Restore routines while taking into account the needs of staff and students.

- ✓ Engage support services to manage the reactions of staff and students.
- ✓ Monitor the support services provided.
- ✓ Provide additional assistance if required and when necessary.
- ✓ Provide a formal staff meeting with professional input (if appropriate).

The first two weeks post the critical incident

- ✓ Monitor progress of those hospitalised, injured or affected.
- ✓ Stay alert for delayed reactions from staff and students.
- ✓ Provide relevant information to those who require it.

3.2.2 Key actions:

- ✓ Notify all key personnel of the problem and assign them tasks focused toward recovery from the critical incident.
- ✓ Notifying students about the problem minimises panic or concern.
- ✓ Recall data backups as per the *Business Continuity Plan [PLN008] and ICT Disaster Recovery Business Continuity Plan [PLN008A]*.
- ✓ Organise alternate facilities in order to continue operations.
- ✓ During a critical incident, staff may be required to work longer, more stressful hours, and a support system should be in place to alleviate some of the stress. Prepare staff ahead of time to ensure that work runs smoothly.
- ✓ Provide counselling opportunities and support - opportunities should be given for staff and students to discuss the incident in a supportive environment. If the incident involves death, staff and students should be apprised of funeral details and given leave to attend. A funeral plays an important role in helping people accept the reality of death and provides rituals for the shared experience of grief. Staff members are not expected to be counsellors; therefore the provision of counselling support appropriate to the particular critical incident is important.

3.3 Review and documentation

After the critical incident has been dealt with it is essential that SHEA undertakes an evaluation so that it can document and record its response to a critical incident. Evaluation and documentation of the CIMP and the roles and functions of the Coordinators and relevant support staff are an essential part of the process. Senior management should conduct a formal evaluation of the process involved in the management of the critical incident after debriefing has occurred. Formal evaluation provides opportunities for feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the CIMP and provides an opportunity for continuous improvement. Feedback should be sought from those who have been involved in various aspects of the operation of the CIMP.

Any action taken in regard to the critical incident should also be recorded along with the final evaluation of the handling of the critical incident. Where the incident, or an individual related to the incident is referred to another person or agency this should also be recorded; however, the privacy needs of individuals should also be respected in this case.

In the case of critical incidents that affect individual students (and particularly those involving international students), a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken will be maintained for at least two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student.

4. Related documents

- POL015 Records Management and Security Procedure
- POL012 Infrastructure and Resources Review and Improvement Policy and Procedure
- PLN008 Business Continuity Plan
- PLN008A ICT Disaster Recovery Business Continuity Plan
- Critical Incident Form
- Critical Incident Register

5. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Executive Management Committee	31 August 2022	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Executive Management Committee	31 May 2023	Clarification on contact for communication
1.2	Executive Management Committee	6 September 2023	Added Section 4: Related Documents
1.3	Executive Management Committee	13 Aug 2025	Updated the emergency contacts

Document owner: CEO

APPENDIX A

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	CONTACT DETAILS

In all cases:

CEO Suresh Basnet	ceo@shea.edu.au 0421 834 973

In cases of critical incident related to a specific campus:

Registrar Editha Delfin Alternate – Kritika Budhathoki	editha.delfin@shea.edu.au 0415 383 124 kritika.budhathoki@shea.edu.au 0413 419 478

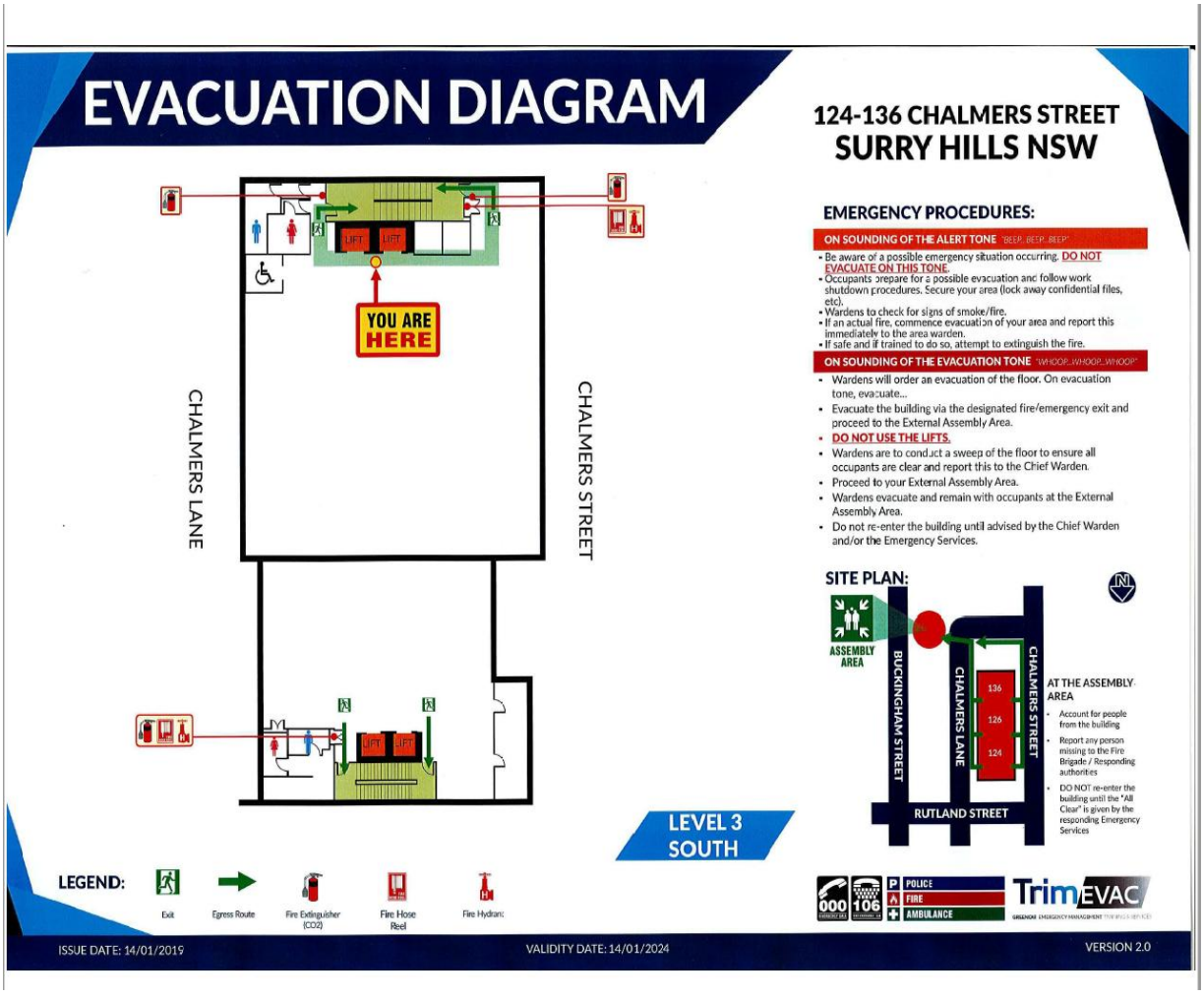
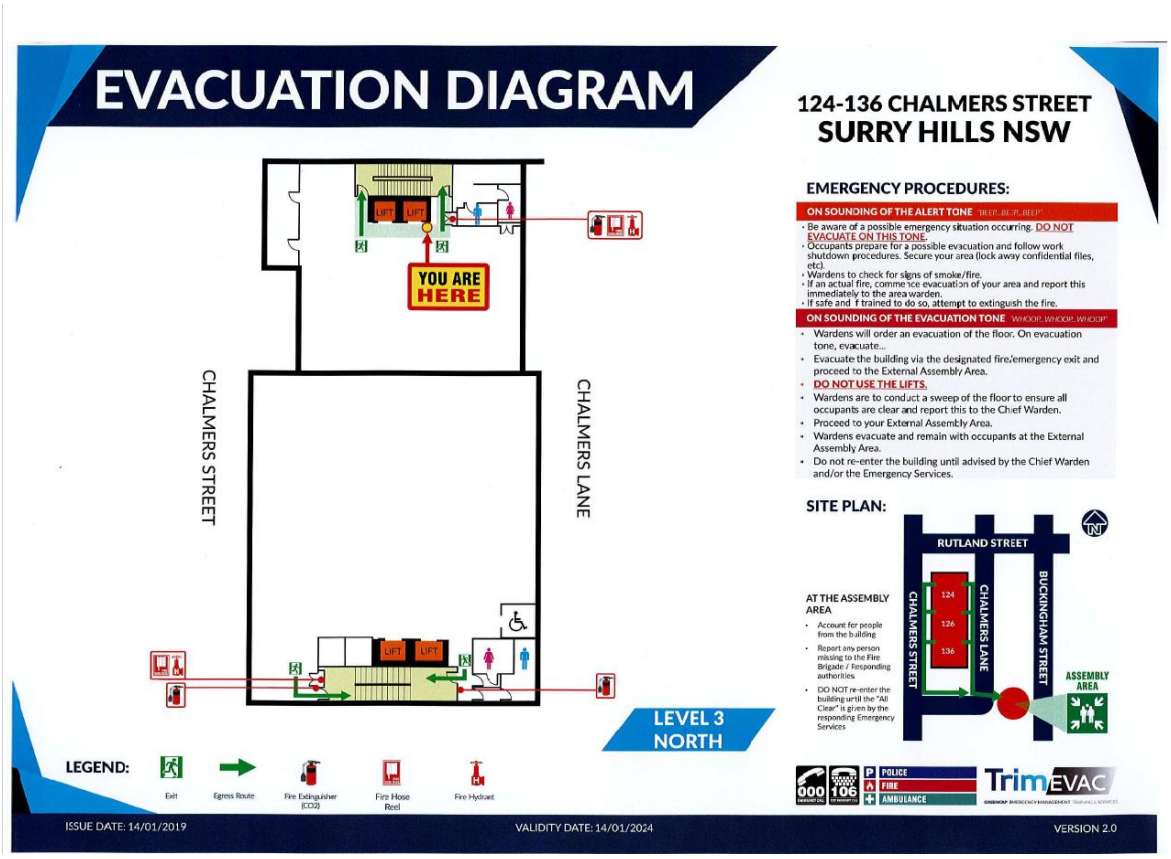
In cases of critical incident related to IT infrastructure:

IT Management company Celox Group Pty Ltd Contact Name- Suresh Basnet Alternate – Editha Delfin	assist@celoxgroup.com.au 02 9194 3340 ceo@shea.edu.au 0421 834 973 editha.delfin@shea.edu.au 0415 383 124

APPENDIX B

EVACUATION PLANS

Surry Hills Campus Evacuation Diagram
(Exit in front of Reception)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