



Category: Health, Safety & Environment	Responsible Owner: VP Operations	Effective Date: February 2025
Policy/Form Number: 9.1	Final Approval Body: Board of Governors	Policy/Form Name: Critical Incident & Crisis Management

A: POLICY

PURPOSE/COMMITMENT:

Columbia College intends to provide a safe and secure working and learning environment that ensures the well-being of all students, employees and visitors, minimizes the damage to property and ensures business continuity. When incidents occur, whether they are critical or minor, Columbia College will respond in a way that offers support, clarity, and direction to all those involved, ensuring the needs of students, faculty, staff, including those with physical, cognitive or learning disabilities, are met.

This policy identifies the responsibility, roles, and procedures used to uphold safety and wellbeing in an emergency or during a specific incident. Where applicable, local resources and legislative requirements under the Emergency Disaster Management Act are included.

Incident Management Plans associated with this policy may be activated, in whole or part, if an incident has occurred or appears imminent which may require action and coordination beyond normal operational procedures. It may also be activated to assist in the planning and coordination of major planned events.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Columbia College employees, students, contractors and visitors.

WHEN TO USE THE POLICY:

This policy and related procedures must be used in the event of any Incident on a Columbia College Campus.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Campus:** includes any building, structure, parking lots, vehicle, space or land, (including vacant land or space) controlled, owned, leased and/or occupied by the College.
- **Crisis:** A critical incident that has escalated to a point where it requires the activation of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and the activation of the crisis management plan.
- **Crisis Management Team (CMT):** The group responsible for overseeing the response to a crisis.
- **Emergency:** A sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action.
- **Emergency Management:** means the process for mitigating, preventing, preparing, responding to, and recovering from an Emergency incident.
- **Emergency Operation Centre:** means a designated facility, room or other space established by the CMT to coordinate the overall College emergency response and support to the College community during an incident.
- **Incident**
 - **Critical Incident:** An event or situation that has the potential to significantly disrupt the normal operations of the institution, pose a threat to safety, or damage the institution's reputation.
 - **Minor:** An occurrence, condition, or situation arising during regularly scheduled activities that resulted in or could have resulted in injuries, illnesses, or negative health consequences.

- **Preparedness:** means measures undertaken in advance to ensure that the College and all community members will be ready to react to incidents, including developing emergency plans, mutual aid agreements, resource inventories, and emergency communications systems, and conducting training and exercises.
- **Response:** Activities that begin when an incident is imminent or is occurring, including:
 - Address the direct effects of an incident; and
 - Are designed to limit loss of life, personal injury, and property damage.
- **Recovery:** Actions and activities designed to return Columbia College and the community as close to the pre-incident state as possible.

RESPONSIBLE OWNER:

VP Operations

B: PROCEDURES

RISK

The College will utilize Government (federal, provincial, municipal) regulations and guidance, and assessment through the Enterprise Risk Management framework to ensure Preparedness for Crises and/or Critical Incidents.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO CRITICAL INCIDENT AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Any person at the College who is aware of an incident that could affect the College and its operations should immediately report it to Security and the Principal or member of Administration. In an Emergency, 911 should be called and Security and a member of the Administration should be informed as quickly as possible.

Crisis Management Team (CMT)

The CMT provides executive-level oversight and critical decision-making during an incident. The CMT establishes an incident command system, and coordinates with community partners. It will develop an action plan, follow up, evaluate, and initiate the secondary response, taking command from first responders and establishing an Emergency Operation Centre if required. Additional responsibilities include ensuring the care and safety of team members, supporting staff and volunteers and ensuring that comprehensive debriefs take place within a reasonable timeframe. Post-incident activities will include damage assessment, Recovery efforts, and conducting post-Incident reviews to identify lessons learned. Where necessary, the CMT, through the Principal or Head of High School, will liaise with the appropriate government ministry to provide regular updates.

The CMT will be activated by the team leader or designate and is responsible for overseeing the institution's response to crises (Crisis Management Plan) and will consist of the following designated roles:

- Team leader (Vice Principal Operations or designate)
- Principal
- Head of High School
- Chief Academic Officer (Vice Principal Academic or designate)
- Risk Management Lead (Director of Finance or designate)
- Communications Lead (Communications Manager or designate)
- Operations & Security Leads (Director of IT, Building Engineer, or designates)
- Depending on the nature and severity of the crisis or incident, the Team Lead or Principal will include one or both of the following roles in the CMT:
 - Student Services Lead (Director of Student Services or designate)
 - Employee Relations (Director of Human Resources or designate)

Occupational Health, Safety & Emergency Committee (OHSEC)

OHSEC are responsible for the following:

- Collaborating as a committee to develop proactive steps to ensure the Preparedness of the College in relation to Critical Incidents and Emergencies, including ensuring that Emergency drills are scheduled and carried out on a regular basis at all College campuses.
- Ensuring that all procedures related to Critical Incidents and Emergencies are regularly reviewed.
- Reviewing all Critical and Minor Incident reports and recommending changes to improve workplace safety or conditions to Administration or the Board of Governors.

Deans & Department Heads

Deans and Department Heads are responsible for Incident Response in their area of responsibility as directed by the CMT, identifying potential critical incident circumstances, and reporting to OHSEC. Deans & Department Heads are also responsible for working with their departments to ensure business continuity in the case of a Crisis or Incident.

Faculty & Staff

Faculty and Staff are responsible for following directions from the CMT or their supervisor (Dean or Department Head) and reporting any potential Critical Incidents or any significant symptoms which may result from a critical incident.

Students

Students are responsible for following the directions of the CMT and reporting any potential Critical Incidents or any significant symptoms which may result from a critical incident.

INCIDENT CLASSIFICATION AND ESCALATION

Incidents will be classified by the CMT based on their severity and potential impact and a clear escalation process will be established to ensure that incidents are reported and addressed appropriately.

Severity	Description	Response Required
Critical Incident	An Incident that could have significant impact such as an event that is experienced as sudden, unexpected, incomprehensible, shocking, and personally upsetting. It has the potential to result in physical and/or emotional distress or displacement which affects employees and students at the College.	The CMT will review the scope of the Incident and work with members of Security, Faculty, Staff and Administration to manage the response.
Minor Incident	A Minor Incident is one with a localized impact such as an occurrence, condition, or situation arising during regularly scheduled activities that result in or could result in minor injuries, illnesses, or negative health consequences.	If the CMT deems the incident to be minor, they will delegate a smaller scale response to relevant employees. A written incident report must be created by the designated leader and shared with the OHSEC for review.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Specific operational procedures for each type of crisis or emergency incident will be developed and reviewed annually by OHSEC. Various crises with procedures will include but will not be limited to the following:

- All-hazard emergency situations including active intruder situations
- Natural disasters
- Medical emergencies including drug overdoses
- Cyberattacks

These procedures will be available to all College community members through SharePoint and communicated through relevant induction processes. These procedures will include necessary evacuation plans, lockdown protocols, response and related business continuity plans.

TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Annual training and exercises will be conducted to ensure that the CMT and other relevant personnel are prepared to respond effectively to crises.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Designated spokespersons will be responsible for communicating with the media and the public. The institution will utilize multiple communication channels to disseminate information during a crisis, including:

- Website
- Email
- MS Teams
- Social media
- Emergency notification system

LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITE:

[Enterprise Risk Management Policy](#)

[Disaster Recovery Plan](#)

[Emergency Management Procedures](#)

[Occupational Health, Safety & Emergency Committee \(OHSEC\) Terms of Reference](#) (Internal)

RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS:

[BC Emergency & Disaster Management Act](#)

[Workers Compensation Act](#)

RELATED POLICIES:

C: APPROVALS

Chair, OHSEC	Date:
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APPROVAL FOR ALL POLICIES:

Responsible Owner:	Date:
Principal or Designate:	Date:
Chair, Board of Governors:	Date:

Proposed Review Date: February 2028	Dates(s) revised: N/A	Replaces Policy/Form Number: N/A
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