

CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

A crisis is an unusual, unexpected situation that:

- requires immediate action
- needs to be managed, resolved, and not ignored, through a specific action plan
- is usually an isolated incident that can pose negative implications
- involves assistance from authorities (fire, police, ambulance, etc.)

Some situations that constitute a crisis situation are:

- Death at a Guiding event
- Serious injury of a Member or employee or sudden acute illness affecting Members of the group
- Disaster of natural causes at an event (meeting, outing, camp)
- Missing Member through losing their way or abduction
- Abuse of a member of Guiding at a Guiding event
- Controversial behaviour of a member of Guiding (substance abuse, sexual improprieties, unsafe behaviour)
- Misuse of Guiding funds.
- A tragedy involving one of our Members or groups travelling

Please use your discretion. If a situation arises that makes you uncomfortable, err on the side of caution and report the situation to your commissioner, they can help you determine the best response.

Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada, Saskatchewan Council upholds two principles:

- A crisis must be resolved as swiftly as possible.
- That both Girl Guides and the public are best served by honest and timely communication.

Communication during a Crisis

The *Safe Guide* clearly outlines communication channels. Attached is “Emergency Response Guidelines – “Communication Plan Guidelines”. The Emergency Response Plan (SG.4) should be filled in prior to every activity/event/camp with as much information as possible and posted by the phone.

Follow these steps: (in accordance with crisis)

1. Assess:

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- Who was involved?
- Where are they now?
- What is their condition?
- What do they need?
- What Guider(s) is with them?
- What is this Guider(s) doing now?

2. Call in the relevant Emergency Services and Support Services. (Use SG.4 pg. 2 as your calling template)
 - Send a specific person(s) to the nearest main access point to escort Emergency Services to the crisis site.
3. Stabilize the Situation:
 - Deal with hazards by identifying and containing them. Remove everyone from harm's way. Do not move the person unless they are in immediate danger.
 - Account for people involved – gather and count.
 - Designate someone (generally the first aider) to care for the ill/injured persons and to look for additional injuries if incident involves personal injury.
 - Maintain leadership.
 - Designate someone to look after those who witnessed the incident.
 - Designate someone to look after the rest of the group who were on-site but not involved.
 - Communicate with other staff.
4. Establish an On-Site Crisis Headquarters:
 - Prepare a protocol for phone calls – who is doing the calling, what is being told. Set up and maintain a phone log book. Refer to SG.4.
 - **Notify your area commissioner or her designate.**
 - **In any crisis, the Saskatchewan provincial commissioner must be notified immediately.** This can be done by contacting the provincial office. After office hours there will be a message on the answering machine that will indicate how to reach the provincial commissioner or a deputy. The provincial commissioner or a deputy will notify the national office following the internal chain of notification. The national office will be the official news source for the media and Guiding Members.
 - Provide staffing of the phone until the crisis is resolved.
 - **Do not talk to the press or media.** If you or your Guiders are contacted by the media, as stated in the *Safe Guide*, your response must be that you are unauthorized to discuss the situation and that they should contact the provincial office.
 - The role of all Guiding Members is to express confidence in the handling of the crisis.
 - It is vital that all Guiding Members in your area be fully briefed about how calls from the media or law enforcement agencies should be handled and referred.
 - Instruct girls and adults to refrain from contacting outside people until they are informed it is okay to do so.
5. Contact parents:
 - Prepare a statement – review what you want to say before making the call.
 - Call parents of all person(s) directly involved in the incident.
6. As appropriate or following the directions of the provincial commissioner:
 - Notify parents of other girls, Guiders and staff.
 - Clarify each team member's assignments.
 - Begin group meetings and ensure counselling for all involved.
 - Keep track of each person affected by the incident.
 - Assign two staff members independent of each other to gather and document the facts.
 - maintain objectivity
 - avoid statements assigning blame
 - talk to everyone directly and indirectly involved

- describe conditions (weather, girls, etc.) before, during and after the event.
- If possible, take pictures.

Serious Accident or Death at a Guiding Event: Procedures to Follow:

1. In any situation it is recognized that death is not pronounced until a qualified medical examiner makes such an assessment. Emergency first aid procedures will be continued until the arrival of emergency medical services.
2. If the patient is a child, EMS (or other professional) to call the parents or guardians of the child to notify them that their child has been involved in a serious accident/medical emergency (check health form). Direct them to meet the adult who accompanied the individual at the emergency facility where the individual is transported. Note time of contact with the parent or guardian.
3. A Guider should accompany the individual(s) to the emergency facility. Take the individual's health form. The Responsible Guider must remain on-site to deal with the police and provide security for witnesses.
4. Keep names of all medical persons who attended on the premises.
5. Segregate the other children and adults who may be witnesses, in order to keep their own recollection of events clear.
6. NEVER interfere with the body of the deceased or any evidence that might surround the body. Do not conduct interviews or collect evidence.
7. A child also has the right to have a parent, guardian or care-giver present when she is being questioned by police. The Responsible Guider on-site should remain with a child suspected of being involved in the incident, to make sure her rights are not violated. If directed by the police to move to another location, such as the police station, the adult will remain with the child until the time her legal guardians arrive.

After the Crisis:

1. Post Accident:
 - Check status of:
 - persons(s) involved in the incident
 - others affected by the incident
 - crisis team members
 - your crisis response plan
 - first aid and related supplies
 - Continue, revise and add any steps to your crisis response plan.
 - Check in with anyone who has left to go home.
2. Prepare Reports:
 - Reports
 - should be factual in content
 - should contain everything that happened and how you and the rest of the Guiding group responded
 - should not be released to anyone who is not authorized to receive them.
 - Forms/Claims

- must be filed
- Incident Report Form (INS.01) Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada. This form is available from your commissioner or on the website and must be sent to national within five (5) days.
- Worker's Compensation if appropriate
- Other relevant agencies.

The provincial commissioner will ensure support and follow-up in the crisis situation.

Saskatchewan Emergency Response Guidelines “Communication Plan Guidelines”.

Definition of a Crisis:

A crisis is a situation that:

- Requires immediate attention
- Is usually an isolated incident that can pose negative implications
- Needs to be managed, resolved, and not ignored, through a specific action plan.

It is understood that this is the sole crisis management document in use in Guiding in Saskatchewan.

In any crisis, the Saskatchewan Provincial Commissioner must be notified immediately. She will ensure a member of the crisis team keeps you fully informed as things progress.

It is her responsibility to contact the Crisis Core Team to determine the extent to which the Crisis Management Plan will be used.

To ensure consistency in execution, there is one Crisis Management Plan in effect in Saskatchewan.

Girl Guides of Canada – Saskatchewan Council upholds two principles:

- A crisis must be resolved as swiftly and equitably as possible and
- That both Girl Guides and the public are best served by honest, candid and timely communication.

Some Situations that constitute a crisis situation are:

1. Death of a girl, Guider, employee, or family member.
2. Serious injury of a member or employee or sudden acute illness affecting members of the group.
3. Disaster of natural causes at an event (camp, meeting, outing).
4. Missing member through losing their way or by abduction.
5. Abuse of a member of Guiding at a Guiding event.
6. Controversial behavior or a member of Guiding (substance abuse, sexual improprieties, unsafe behavior).
7. Misuse of Guiding funds.
8. A tragedy involving one of our members or groups traveling outside of Canada.

Communication during a Crisis

If we are not actively managing our reputation during a crisis or even in times of calm, someone else is doing it for us!

The role of all Guiding members is to express confidence in the handling of the crisis and to divert all media inquiries to the Crisis Manager.

It is vital that all Guiding members in your Area be fully briefed about how calls from the media or law enforcement agencies should be handled and referred.

The SAFE GUIDE clearly outlines communications channels. See 'Safety and Emergency Response Planning under each Risk Level 1-4 (specifically the 'when to communicate and to whom' sections. The Emergency Response Plan (SG.4) and INS.01 forms also direct Guiders in crisis communication. These forms and the Safe Guide Document can be accessed through the National website www.girlguides.ca.

If you or your Guiders are contacted by the Media:

- Never reply "no comment".
- Never assume anything to say is off the record.
- Take reports name and number and let them know that someone from the Crisis Management Team will be in touch with them as soon as possible.

WHAT TO SAY if you are called: "We are aware of the situation and are unable to provide more information at this time. A member of our Crisis Management Team will be in contact with you shortly'.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE CARDS

One way to ensure that your Guiders have up to date information about Crisis Communication and support, is to provide them with a wallet card.

The emergency response card, distributed to every Guider, lists what to do in the event of an emergency at a unit meeting, guiding activity or function.

It is designed to help to ensure that representatives of GGC have immediate support in an emergency and are able to give consistent messages to the public.

On the card there are 3 contact names and numbers: The Guider's Area Commissioner, the Provincial Commissioner and the Provincial Office. Guiders are to be instructed to contact **ANY ONE OF THE THREE** numbers on the card immediately.

It is recommended that this is done in the early fall of each year to ensure that new Guiders receive cards and instruction and all information is accurate for the year.

Serious Accident or Death at a Guiding Event: Procedures to Follow

1. In any situation it is recognized that death is not pronounced until a qualified medical examiner makes such an assessment. Emergency first aid procedures will be continued until the arrival of emergency medical services.
2. If the victim is a child, call the parents or guardians of the child to notify them that their child has been involved in a serious accident/medical emergency (check health form). Direct them to meet the adult in charge at the emergency facility where the individual is transported. Note time of contact.
3. The Responsible Guider of the event should accompany the individual(s) to the emergency facility. Take the individual's health form. The second adult in charge should remain on-site to deal with the police and provide security for witnesses.
4. Keep names of all medical persons who attended on the premises.
5. Segregate the other children and adults who may be witnesses, in order to keep their recollection of event's clear.
6. NEVER interfere with the body of the deceased or any evidence that might surround the body. Do not conduct interview or collect evidence.
7. A young person also has the right to have a parent, guardian or caregiver present when she is being questioned by police. The Responsible Guider on-site should remain with a child suspected of being involved in the accident, to make sure her rights are not violated. If directed by the police to move to another location, such as the police station, the adult will remain with the child until the time her legal guardians arrive.

Before making the call to the parents/guardians, make sure you have the following information:

This is....	My name _____, I am with your daughter's Girl Guide group.
Situation	<p>What happened? _____</p> <p>When did it happen? _____</p> <p>Who was involved? _____</p> <p>Where are they now? _____</p> <p>What is their condition? _____</p> <p>What do they need? _____</p> <p>What Guider(s) is with them? _____</p>
The Plan	<p>What action taken so far? _____</p> <p>We are planning to do the following: _____ _____</p>

APPENDIX I

Mental Health Considerations

A critical (or traumatic) incident is an unusual challenging event, outside the usual realm human experience, that generates such intense emotional reactions that it overwhelms one's usual ability to cope with work and personal activities.

A crisis is an acute emotional reaction to a critical incident.

Critical Incident Stress Management, or CISM, is an intervention protocol developed specifically for dealing with traumatic events. It is a formal, highly structured and professionally recognized process for helping those involved in a critical incident to share their experiences, vent emotions, learn about stress reactions and symptoms and given referral for further help if required. It is not psychotherapy. It is a confidential, voluntary and educative process, sometimes called 'psychological first aid'.

If you require CISM support contact the International Critical incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) 24 hour emergency hotline 410-313-2473.

Things to Do After A Critical Incident

- WITHIN THE FIRST 24 - 48 HOURS periods of appropriate physical exercises alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- Structure your time - keep busy.
- You're normal and having normal reactions - don't label yourself crazy.
- Talk to people - talk is the most healing medicine.
- Don't use drugs or alcohol to feel better.
- Reach out - people do care.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Spend time with others and talk about what happened to you.
- Help others who were affected as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others.
- Keep a journal. Write down your thoughts and feelings about the incident. Research has shown this is very effective for symptom reduction and resolution of the trauma.
- Do things that feel good to you.
- Realize those around you are under stress.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible which will give you a feeling of control over your life, i.e., if someone asks you what you want to eat - answer them even if you're not sure.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Reoccurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal - don't try to fight them - they'll decrease over time and become less painful.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it).

For Family and Friends

- Listen carefully.
 - Spend time with the traumatized person.
 - Offer your assistance and a listening ear if they have not asked for help.
 - Reassure them that they are safe.
 - Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, minding children.
 - Give them some private time.
 - Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.
 - Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse" - traumatized people are not consoled by those statements. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them.
1. <http://www.criticalincidentstress.com>
 2. Critical Incident Stress Management: Group Crisis Intervention 4th edition
Jeffery T, Mitchell, Ph.D., C.T.S