



YAXHAM PARISH CHARITY

Business Continuity, Emergency and Critical Incident Policy

1. Aims of the policy

Emergencies and critical incidents in the workplace can affect people physically and psychologically and affect program continuity of Yaxham Parish Charity.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Yaxham Parish Charity prepares for and effectively responds to emergency situations and critical incidents through the appropriate use of resources. The prevention and effective management of emergency situations and critical incidents can assist to minimise the negative impact of an unexpected event.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and Trustees.

1.2. Definitions

1.2.1. Emergencies

- An emergency is an unplanned or imminent event that affects or threatens the health, safety or welfare of people, property, and infrastructure, and which requires a significant and coordinated response. The defining characteristic of an emergency event or situation is that usual resources are overwhelmed or have the potential to be overwhelmed.
- Emergencies may be a specific event with a clear beginning, end and recovery process, or a situation that develops over time and where the implications are gradual rather than immediate.

1.2.2. Emergency Management

Emergency Management is the coordination of an emergency response and management of recovery. The aim of emergency management is to minimise physical and psychological impacts on all parties and to minimise damage to assets, operations, reputation, and staff productivity.

1.2.3. Critical Incidents

A critical incident is an unexpected traumatic event, involving personal or professional threat, which evokes extreme stress, fear, or injury. Providing appropriate supports following a critical incident is part of emergency management.

1.2.4. Traumatic Events

A traumatic event is one in which a person experiences, witnesses or is confronted by experiences that involve actual, threatened or perceived death or serious injury and/ or threat to own or others physical and emotional integrity. The person's response may then



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include intense fear, feelings of helplessness and horror, which impact on their sense of 'self'.

1.2.5. Complex Trauma

Complex trauma refers to a condition resulting from multiple exposures to one or more traumas. When repeatedly exposed to traumatic stress, disruptions can occur in brain structure and function, central and autonomic nervous system arousal, endocrinological and immunological function. These biological disruptions interact with psychological, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual processes.

1.2.6. Critical Incident Debriefing (CID)

Critical Incident Debriefing (CID) is a preventative health measure to minimise the impact of traumatic events and the development of major psychological health problems such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

2. Principles

2.1. Emergency management planning is being prepared for events or incidents that stretch our ability to cope beyond normal day-to-day capacity. Yaxham Parish Charity is committed to the protection, staff, volunteers, Trustees and visitors during emergencies.

2.2. Yaxham Parish Charity swiftly and effectively responds to emergency situations, with the foremost goals of preserving life, protecting the organisation's assets, and restoring operations as quickly as possible.

2.3. Critical incidents can be a threatening experience and appropriate support is required to minimise long term effects arising from exposure to the trauma.

2.4. Emergency situations will be prevented as far as practical. The negative impacts of emergency situations and critical incidents are minimised through effective management.

3. Key Personnel and Functions

3.1. It is the responsibility of the Clerk to keep processes and risk assessments up to date. These will be reviewed annually.

Trustees	Delegation/Task <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and Review Business Continuity, Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.• Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.
<Managers>	Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.



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Lead Manager/ Development Manager	<p>CEO/Manager Ensures development and implementation of Business Continuity, Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.</p> <p>Ensures potential disaster and emergency situations are identified, and appropriate emergency management plans are in place.</p> <p>Managers Responsibility for implementation of emergency and critical incident procedures, including identification of potential situations, developing, documenting, and communicating response plans, reporting on actual situations, and reviewing policy and procedures following a disaster or emergency situation.</p> <p>Coordinate staff training in emergency and critical incident, such as fire response, building evacuation, etc.</p>
Staff and volunteers	<p>Compliance with Business Continuity, Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.</p> <p>Contribute to the development of Business Continuity, Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.</p> <p>Health and Safety Lead/Administration Officer Coordinate emergency evacuation drills.</p>

4. Emergency Recovery Elements

4.1. Emergency situations can take many forms and whilst it is impossible to pre-empt any particular situation, it is important to have recovery strategies in place for Yaxham Parish Charity main operations. The table - Emergency Recovery Elements, details the actions to be taken in event of an emergency and those responsible for leading on each element. Also included is a table detailing the most common emergency situations, their potential impact and mitigation.

Activity	Action	Responsibility
Communication	Discuss communication and the need for an emergency meeting with Chair	Clerk / Trustees
	Agree any communications required with press	Chair / Trustees / Clerk



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	Contact list is up to date (Appendix D)	Clerk
	Database system is web-based and can be remotely accessed	Clerk
	Post to be diverted if necessary	Clerk
ICT	Key staff have remote access to the server Server back-ups are stored off-site IT providers to provide temporary refurbished software	Clerk
	Electronic copies are kept of all critical documents	Clerk
Staffing (Issues due to illness and emergency)	Trained First Aider(s)	Health and Safety Officer
	Safeguarding Process and DBS checks in place where required	Clerk

4.2. Emergency Recovery Log

The Emergency Recovery Log should be filled in after any emergency event. A template can be found at Appendix A.

5. Business Continuity Drill

A Business Continuity 'Drill' should take place bi-annually and the results should be recorded on the template at Appendix B. Obviously it is impossible to trial the entire plan without an actual emergency happening, however elements such as the Staff Communication Cascade can be trialled. All information contained in the plan will be kept up to date (i.e. staff changes, new insurers etc.) and a review of all the information contained in the plan will be held every two years to ensure that it is current and relevant.

6. Emergency Hazard Analysis

6.1. Key

- 1 **High** Likelihood and **High** Impact
- 2 **Low** Likelihood and **High** Impact
- 3 **High** Likelihood and **Low** Impact



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4 Low Likelihood and Low Impact

Hazard	Impact	Mitigation	Risk score
Flooding	Office Closed Loss of Files Damage to Furniture and Equipment	Relocate Offices Remote working Data backed up off-site Insurance	4
IT Failure	Loss of emails Loss of website Loss of communications	Data backed up to Dropbox	2
Loss of Utilities	Loss of light, power, heating, water, telephones etc	Remote working Mobile devices	4
Fire	Risk to individuals Damage / loss of building and contents	Insurance	2
Loss of premises	Restricted delivery of service	Relocation Remote working insurance	4
Access denied by emergency services	Temporary restricted delivery of services	Relocation Remote working Direction to website	4
Pandemic	Possible disruption in activities	Remote working	4



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7. Emergency Response Process





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7.2. When an emergency situation arises, the primary aim of the response is to ensure the safety of all people on the premises, preserve life and protect property. Yaxham Parish Charity initiates recovery and aims to restore operations as quickly as possible.

7.3. The availability of critical incident debriefing is an essential component of the organisation's approach to emergency management.

7.4. When required, supportive counselling is provided to consumers, staff, volunteers, and trustees who are affected by an emergency or critical incident within 48 hours of the event (for defusing and mobilisation) and then within 72 hours (for critical incident debriefing).

7.5. A list of processes relating to specific emergencies and evacuation is included in Appendix F.

8. Critical Incident Reporting and Debriefing

8.1. Staff, trustees, volunteers, and consumers who experience a critical incident related to their involvement with Yaxham Parish Charity should immediately inform where possible the Chair. If this is not possible, they should immediately inform the Clerk.

8.2. A Critical Incident Report:

- Is to be completed by the staff member involved in the incident or notification of the incident.
- Is to contain as much information as possible and indicate the people directly involved in the incident.

8.2.1 The staff member who receives the report will ensure that the person(s) identified in the critical incident receives all appropriate support. They are to contact emergency services where required and must contact their line manager immediately.

8.2.2. The Clerk in conjunction with Chair will assess the Critical Incident and implement a plan of action to follow up the Critical Incident.

8.2.3. Where required, a meeting will be organised to determine issues and responsibilities relating to:

- Assessing risks and response actions
- Liaison with emergency and other services
- Contact with the affected person's relatives and other supports
- Liaison with other organisations
- Counselling and supporting staff, trustees, volunteers, and consumers not directly involved in, but affected by, the incident.
- Media management (if required)

8.2.4. Yaxham Parish Charity will conduct a review of actions arising from the above meeting to ensure:

- Follow up such as de-briefing, counselling and prevention strategies have been completed.
- Relevant people have been informed of all outcomes from the incident



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- A recommendation as to the response to the critical incident is documented and included in the quality improvement cycle.
- Further follow up required is documented and responsibilities allocated to clerk.

8.3. Critical Incident Debriefing (CID)

8.3.1 Critical Incident Debriefing (CID) will occur within 72 hours after the incident.

8.3.2. Debriefing may include individual and group counselling, where the aim is to:

- Decrease feelings of isolation
- Provide people affected by the incident with a facilitated session to assist them to normalise their thoughts and feelings. Groups assist people to explore their differing perspectives of the incident and share their similar thoughts and feelings.

8.3.3. There will usually be an initial counselling session, followed up with one or more debriefing sessions.

8.3.4. Initial counselling will occur as soon as possible after the incident, preferably immediately or within a few hours. Depending on the type or severity of the critical incident, initial defusing may include:

- A short factual statement about what is known about the incident, the possible effects on those involved, what is being done for them and what is going to happen in the future, e.g., planned debriefing sessions.
- Information on acute stress response (what is happening to people now) and how people can care for themselves.
- An arrangement for a structured debriefing session within 72 hours.
- The provision of different levels of service for those differently affected
- Referrals to various resources including counsellors

8.3.5. Yaxham Parish Charity will maintain confidentiality to ensure that:

- Only a record of when and where a debriefing took place will be kept; and
- No information will be released without the agreement of the individual or group.

This policy was agreed on 23rd October 2024 and is due for review in October 2027.



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Appendix A

Emergency Recovery Log

Date	Time	Information / Decision / Action	Name

Date	Action	Name
	<i>Record Drill activities / Review of Policies etc</i>	



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Appendix C

Staff Emergency Communication Cascade

1. Clerk
2. Chair

Appendix D

Staff Contact List

Name	Position	Contact email	Contact Numbers

Appendix E

Staff Emergency Contact List

Name of staff	Name of emergency contact	Relationship to staff member	Contact number



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Appendix F

Specific Emergency Processes and Evacuation

Evacuation

In the event of an alert to evacuate - either verbal, automatic alarm or manual alarm, all staff, trustees, volunteers, and visitors:

- Proceed to the designated assembly area (front car park if at offices)
- Ensure assistance is provided to people with disabilities and/or special needs
- Health and Safety lead to collect visitor sign-in and staff attendance registers and direct people to assembly point
- Check attendance at assembly area against the attendance registers.
- Remain at the assembly area until advised that it is safe to return to premises.

Additional guidelines for threat of fire:

In the event of a fire threat and if it is safe to do so, close all doors and windows and turn off power supply before leaving the premises.

Additional guidelines for bomb threat:

In the event of a bomb threat and the threat is not immediate, open all doors and windows before leaving the premises.

Fire

In the event of a fire:

- Trigger the fire alarm
- Contact fire emergency services.
- Alert the nominated fire warden and/or a senior staff member
- Evacuate people from the immediate area of the fire behind a rated fire door or outside the building
- Fight the fire with existing equipment if safe to do so

Bomb Threat

In the event of a bomb threat via phone call:

1. Remain calm
2. Record as much information as possible from the caller using questions and observations including:
 - ❖ What type of bomb is it?
 - ❖ How will it go off?
 - ❖ What does it look like?
 - ❖ When is it set to go off?



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- ❖ Where is it?
- ❖ When was it put there?
- ❖ Who put it there?
- ❖ Why was it put there?
- ❖ Will it explode, or will something be released?
- ❖ If a substance is released, what is it? How much is there? How will it be released?
- ❖ Observations about the caller: gender, age, accent?
- ❖ Any background noise?
- 3. Contact police who can assist in determining if evacuation is required
- 4. If instructed, evacuate, staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors as for the above evacuation procedures
- 5. Notify CEO/Manager and/or other senior staff in the event of a letter bomb (threat via postal mail):
- 6. Do not disturb, move or touch the package if possible
- 7. Contact police who can assist in determining if evacuation is required
- 8. If instructed, evacuate consumers, staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors as for the above evacuation procedures
- 9. Notify CEO/Manager and/or other senior staff

Suspicious Mail

In the event of a suspicious item of postal mail arriving to the premises:

- Do not disturb, move, or touch the package if possible
- If you have touched the article wash your hands if it is possible, within the work area
- Contact police who can assist in determining if evacuation is required
- Inform others present of what has occurred and advise them to stay in their work area
- Prevent others from entering the work area
- Do not attempt to clean up spilt material or brush it off your clothing
- If instructed, evacuate consumers, staff, Board members, students, volunteers and visitors as for the above evacuation procedures
- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other senior staff

Hold-up

In the event of a hold-up situation:

- Assume the offender is armed and that any firearms are loaded.
- Comply with instructions given by the offender, doing no more or less than what you are told to do, and answer all questions asked
- Do not attempt to disarm or apprehend the offender
- Take mental notes of details about the offender and any items that are touched by the offender



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Immediately after the incident:

- Lock access doors to secure the area and prevent people from approaching.
- Notify the police immediately.
- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other senior staff.
- Attend to the post-incident needs of consumers, staff, trustees, volunteers, and visitors affected by the incident.

Flood

In the event of a flood:

- Do not enter the flood waters
- Eliminate potential electrical hazards
- Place high value equipment and records away from impending floodwaters if it is safe to do so
- Stay in a safe location while it continues to offer protection
- Evacuate, staff, trustees, volunteers, and visitors as for the above evacuation procedures
- Contact and liaise with emergency services if required.
- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other senior staff.