Approving University Official(s): President and Vice Chancellor
Responsible Unit: Facilities
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Critical Incident Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes a clear and consistent framework for Critical Incident Policy (the "Policy") at Yorkville University ("Yorkville"). It provides guidance to ensure alignment with the institution's operational, academic, and regulatory obligations, and supports Yorkville's commitment to protecting our people, their welfare, and public safety as our highest priority. This Critical Incident Policy is designed to provide clarity on our incident response plans with a focus on preventing or reducing the potential for harm to faculty, staff, and students, property, operations, and services; as well as avoiding serious injury or loss of life; and protecting the reputation and integrity of the Institution.

This Policy pertains to all learning and work environments, and in all instances, aims to engage trauma with informed and culturally appropriate practices.

Scope

This Policy applies to all members of our community including students, employees, contractors, suppliers, volunteers, and visitors.

Definitions

Active Attacker – A situation where one or more people are actively engaged in inflicting injury or damage to people or property or are attempting to inflict injury or damage to people or property, often carried out in a confined and populated area.

Command Centre – The predetermined location where the Critical Incident Team (CIT) will gather to review the circumstances of a critical incident and to ensure response protocols are adequate and operating as anticipated. This may include virtual meeting rooms created in MS Teams.

Contractor – An independent individual or a corporation or other entity who agrees to perform services for or furnish materials to the Institution.

Critical Incidents – Abnormal or unstable situations that occur without warning, beyond the scope of business-as-usual activities, and with the potential to disrupt operations or services

fully or partially in learning or work environments, cause serious injury or loss of life, cause significant property damage, or threaten our reputation. Examples include natural disasters, acts of violence, acute mental health emergencies, medical crises, and other incidents with the potential to have a substantial impact on the Institution's community.

Critical Incident Team (CIT) – The Institution ensures critical incident preparedness by assigning appropriate employees and delegates to participate as members of the Critical Incident Team (CIT) for each learning and work environment. The members of the CIT are listed in the CIT Guide, which serves as a reference for all involved. Members of the CIT are also provided with training and awareness materials by the Director of Safety & Security to ensure they are informed of their responsibilities in the event of an incident. Assigned delegates are similarly trained and equipped to respond as needed.

Employee/Staff/Faculty – A person who performs work for wages in any capacity for the Institution, including student employees.

Learning Environment – Any site, in-person or online, where academic programs and services are made available to students at Yorkville or Toronto Film School.

Manager/Supervisor – A person who has charge over a workplace or authority over an employee or contractor.

Operational Incidents – Business-as-usual or routine disruptions that are typical or probable in learning or work environments, and are small- scale events, such as false fire alarms, IT Ticketing system disruptions, weather related disruptions (snow / ice storms) or isolated power outages. Response activities are coordinated at the operational level until the incident is likely to, or has, breached the tolerance, severity level, or decision-making authority of the operational level.

Personal Information – Recorded information about an identifiable individual.

Senior Leadership – Individuals who at the relevant time, are designated as members of the Senior and Extended Leadership Teams, Deans of faculties or Chairs of programs.

Security – Security guards contracted by the Institution to provide physical protection of people and assets and who are responsible for enforcing Institution policies and procedures.

Significant Incidents – Situations with less immediate risk to people or property that may develop over time or evolve to become a threat to normal operations.

Students – Individuals who are studying at any Yorkville/Toronto Film School location or online at Yorkville/Toronto Film School, including those on leave or currently suspended.

Visitors – Individuals who are attending any location as a guest.

Volunteer – Individuals who are participating in a volunteer activity or project in a learning or work environment.

Work Environment – Any site at which an employee or contractor performs work for the Institution including any property or buildings owned, leased, or managed by the Institution, and any other place an employee or contractor is located while performing work for the Institution or while representing the Institution.

Policy Statement

1. **Incident Categories**
   a. Incidents are divided into three (3) categories for the purpose of differentiating between the threat levels of each type of incident. The three (3) categories are Critical, Significant and Operational.
   b. Critical incidents are those with an immediate risk to people or property, and include, but are not limited to:
      - Active attacker.
      - Armed suspect.
      - Explosive device.
      - Explosion.
      - Hostage situation.
      - Acts of self-harm or drug-related incidents that require medical attention.
      - Accidental death.
      - Natural disasters- Critical.
   c. Significant incidents are those with less immediate risk to people or property, and may develop over time or evolve to become a threat to normal operations, such as:
      - Civil disobedience barring access to facilities or buildings.
      - Prolonged utilities outages.
      - Natural disasters- Significant
      - Catastrophic leaks / spills / chemical / gas release.
      - Threats against a person or property.
   d. Operational incidents are small-scale disruptions that are expected to occur in learning or work environments, such as:
      - False fire alarms.
      - Snow / ice / windstorms.
      - Short-lived utility outages.
   e. Some incidents may be difficult to immediately categorize and could be interpreted as Critical or Significant depending on the scale or circumstances. Examples include:
      - Threats against people or property.
      - Bomb threat.
      - Fire in progress.
      - Missing student/faculty/staff

2. **Critical Incident Team (CIT) – Roles & Responsibilities**
   a. It is the responsibility of external emergency responders to isolate, contain, and defuse active incidents.
   b. The Critical Incident Team (CIT) is accountable for the safety of all people in any learning or work environment for the Institution.
   c. CIT members are identified in the Critical Incident Team Guide, and members are categorized as Core members (required for every critical incident response) or

Functions (brought into incident response as deemed appropriate by the Chair). Where appropriate, the CIT will have members from counselling services, medical staff, and campus security.

d. The Critical Incident Team invocation and triggers are identified in the Critical Incident Team Guide.
e. CIT members remain away from the incident scene, except where they are actively caught up in the incident and response. Where already involved, CIT members will relay information and observations back to the rest of the CIT, as they are able.
f. The most senior person that is present in a location affected by a serious and potentially Critical Incident has the authority to respond using their best judgment at the immediate onset of such an incident, adhering to the policies of the Institution and aligned with instructions and directions given by emergency services responding to the scene.
    - As soon as possible after enacting necessary protocols, the employee should contact the Director of Safety and Security.
    - The Director of Safety and Security will escalate the situation to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to coordinate further response and Critical Incident declarations as necessary.
    - The SLT and Critical Incident Team (CIT) must be kept informed throughout the response process.
g. Responsibilities of the CIT members include:
    - Accountability for the safety of all occupants in any learning or work environment, including the authority to act decisively to limit the risk or impacts of an emerging threat (such as by closing/vacating the campus).
    - Providing input and recommendations on the need to declare a critical incident and stand up a response.
    - Provide input and recommendations on the messaging, cadence and content of communications issued both externally and internally and ensure all messaging is coordinated through the Director of Communications.
    - Contain, control and limit the sharing of information regarding an active incident.
    - Allocate resources and assign duties to support personnel to assist with the management of the incident response.
    - Ensure adequate resources are available twenty-four (24) hours per day until the incident is resolved and consult with the People Team as needed to ensure adequate rest breaks are allocated to participants involved in the response.
    - Consult and communicate with emergency services, regulatory bodies or other authorities.
    - Assess damage and impacts to people and operations.
    - Develop objectives and plans for a safe return to normal operations, where necessary.
    - Provide input and recommendations on the dissolution of the critical incident and resumption of normal operations.

3. Incident Support Considerations

a. A command centre will be identified at each learning and work environment and the CIT will gather at that location as soon as reasonable at the first alert of a Critical or Significant incident.
    - With consideration to hybrid and remote working arrangements, a virtual command centre will be created in MS Teams and sent to all members and delegates by the most senior member of the CIT or their assistant, to ensure as many members as possible of the CIT can participate in the incident response.
b. In the event of an incident where communications, networks, or technology are affected and have failed, the CIT will assemble at a predetermined location at a learning or work environment. Locations for onsite CIT meeting rooms will be established and communicated to all members of the CIT and their delegates and identified in the Critical Incident Team (CIT) Guide.
c. CIT meeting spaces must have emergency power, as well as reliable telephone and network connectivity.
    - Should a designated meeting space allocated for the CIT be occupied, the occupants will be asked to vacate to accommodate the response efforts.
    - Should a designated meeting space allocated for the CIT be non- functional for any reason, it may be necessary to identify an off-site alternative.
d. Where necessary, CIT members may need to attend the location of the Critical or Significant incident to support the management of the situation and the recovery process, including travelling to that location to support onsite recovery.
e. During a Critical or Significant incident, it may be necessary to provide temporary shelter to people for an unknown duration of time, often due to events unfolding in the area surrounding a learning or work environment. Depending on the type of incident and the capability of the Institution or authorities to resolve the situation, learning and work environments may need to serve as a temporary place of refuge. Situations where this may be necessary are:
    - Where there is insufficient warning or time to safely evacuate all occupants who may be at risk.
    - Where an emergency is short-lived.
    - Where people would be at greater risk if they evacuated, such as where the air quality is questionable (e.g., chemical, biological, or radiological incident).
    - Where inclement weather (e.g., serious weather events) would make travel from the location unsafe or higher risk.
    - Where police action is actively taking place in the community (e.g., shooter at large).
    - Where a major traffic/aircraft incident results in impassable road conditions preventing safe evacuation.
    - Where there has been a hazardous material spill or release.

4. Notifications and Communications

a. All incidents or emergencies must be reported to the security team or the Director of Safety & Security as soon as possible and where life safety is in immediate jeopardy, 9-1-1 will be contacted to activate external emergency services as soon as possible. Additional details on how to report and respond to an active incident are outlined in the Reporting an Incident Procedure.

b. Incidents reported to the Director of Safety & Security requiring Critical Incident Team response will be escalated to a Core member of the Critical Incident Team (such as the Chief Financial Officer), so that a Critical Incident Team response can be coordinated, according to the process identified in the Critical Incident Team Guide.
c. Every effort will be made to inform relevant members of the Institution of any Critical or Significant incident at any learning or work environment.
d. Internal and external messages will be distributed with approval by the Chief Executive Officer or the President and Vice Chancellor, or their delegate and may include providing first language support where necessary.
e. Internal messages can be distributed by the following means:
    - Verbal.
    - Non-verbal e.g., activation of building fire systems to prompt evacuation).
    - Visual.
    - Written.
f. Communications will create external messages as approved by the Chief Executive Officer or the President and Vice Chancellor or their delegate, in collaboration with the Director of Safety & Security for distribution to:
    - Media and news outlets.
    - Social media channels.
    - External agencies such as emergency services and intelligence agencies.
    - Student-facing portals of communication.
g. If a Critical or Significant incident requires notification to government officials, those communications are managed by the Governance, Regulatory, and Government Affairs team, led by the Senior Vice President Governance, Regulatory and Government Affairs.

5. Assumptions

a. This Critical Incident Policy represents a summary of reasonable steps designed to support the Institution in addressing incidents in learning or work environments and pairs with the Critical Incident Team (CIT) Guide to ensure alignment, consistency and clear direction in the event of an emerging threat to people, property and services.
b. Due to the unpredictable nature of these events, it is necessary to recognize the following assumptions that may affect the outcome of managing Critical or Significant incidents:
    - Critical or Significant incidents and other emergencies can occur at any time, day or night, weekends, or holidays with little or no warning.
    - The events that transpire in an incident are unpredictable.
    - Support and operational response plans generated as guidance for responding to incidents serve to provide a baseline for response and may require modifications when invoked to meet the requirements of the situation as it evolves.
    - Depending on the nature of an incident, external emergency services may be delayed in responding to a learning or work environment.

6. Wellness & Wellbeing

a. Critical or Significant incidents may be highly stressful, and the Institution recognizes that such incidents may generate a wide range of physical, cognitive, or emotional responses, which have the potential to overwhelm a person's usual coping abilities. Providing appropriate support to our staff, faculty and students is an important component of our response protocol. As each incident is unique, so are the support provisions which are intended to align with the needs of students, staff, and faculty as soon as reasonably possible, immediately following, and ongoing, as appropriate to the circumstance and the needs of the members of the Institution. The following support provisions are examples:
b. Trauma-informed individuals or group outreach and check-ins including clear communications and information about regular and additional supports available.
c. Additional Counselling offerings such as group debrief, classroom visit, drop- in availability.
d. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for staff/faculty.
e. Academic accommodation and advisement for students whose course work was disrupted by the incident.
f. Community support offerings such as Victim Services.

The Director of Safety and Security is responsible for the development of procedures, guidelines, protocols and other documents related to the administration of this policy and related documents. The Director is also responsible for maintaining records and files related to significant and serious incidents and the review and ongoing improvement of policies and procedures. In coordination with Campus leadership, the Director will ensure the provision of contact information needed by International Students to respond to the types of emergencies likely to occur on or off campus.

The Director of Safety & Security, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), will review this policy at a minimum of every 12 months to ensure it remains relevant, appropriate, and compliant with applicable legislative requirements as well as evolving best practices in higher education and critical incident management. In addition, this policy and procedures related to it will be reviewed following each Critical or Significant incident. This review will take into account feedback from faculty, staff, students and CIT members involved in or affected by the incident and will recommend improvements to incident response.

Related Information

- Protocols for reacting to and reporting incidents.
- Business Continuity Framework.
- Critical Incident Team (CIT) Guide.

Contacts

For questions regarding this policy, please contact:

Department/Office Name: Academic Governance Office
Email: academicgovernance@yorkvilleu.ca

Note: Names and structures of Yorkville offices or governing bodies may change over time. Such changes do not affect the validity of this policy. To confirm the current responsible office or body, contact the Office of Regulatory and Government Affairs at academicgovernance@yorkvilleu.ca.

Revision History

Version Code	Date	Summary of Changes	Authorized by (Title)
1.0	January 1, 2025	New policy	President and Vice Chancellor
1.1	September 25, 2025	Updated to new template	-