

# Critical Incident Response Guideline

## Potential Circumstances which would warrant a CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE

1. Fire
2. A missing child
3. Sudden health/safety issue which
  - i. Places an individual at risk and/or
  - ii. Requires emergency medical help
4. Tornado / severe storm conditions
5. Potentially violent or disruptive individual
6. An individual displaying intense emotions or tears
7. An unexpected 'walk-in' individual seeking help or assistance

### **\*\*\* Preventions / Cautions / Resources \*\*\***

- Ushers and Church Council members shall be knowledgeable regarding the location of all:
  - Clip boards containing the Critical Incident Response plan
  - Fire extinguishers,
  - First aid kits,
  - Telephones,
  - Flashlights
- Ushers and Church Council members shall be knowledgeable in CPR/AED
  - Shall know location of Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
- Ushers and the assigned Council Member clearly identified at all times with ID tags or 'badges'
- The church council member who is assigned for the day or event will
  - Identify him/herself to the usher corps, pastors, and nursery staff upon arrival,
  - Be unencumbered by other responsibilities,
  - Be free to, and expected to, 'float' periodically through the building,
  - Be prepared to lead and direct the procedures outlined for a Critical Incident Response

## SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

### 1. FIRE

- a. Call 911
  - i. Immediately
  - ii. Asking or debating if someone else has done is not worth the risk of a delay
  - iii. In case of injury, immediately make an announcement requesting that any doctors/nurses respond (use a microphone if the congregation is in the sanctuary)
- b. Fire extinguishers
  - i. Know the locations of all
  - ii. Attempt to see that all are in use
- c. Assign someone to close all hallway doors
  - i. do so immediately
  - ii. interior and exterior
- d. Notify the nursery
  - i. Begin immediate evacuation of all children to outdoors
    1. Preferably to the grassy area between the church and the veterinary's Animal Medical Center
  - ii. If vacating the nursery
    1. send someone to recruit additional help to do so
    2. anticipate the possibility of having to hand children out a window if the hallway is restricted by fire/smoke
    3. ask those first parents responding to take more than one child outside with them
- e. Check off all response items on the clip board as soon as possible

### 2. MISSING CHILD

- a. Find parent(s)
  - i. Request they leave the pew with you
  - ii. Report privately directly to parent(s) or
    1. Come forward and quietly interrupt a pastor to make an announcement
  - iii. Confirm first that parent(s)/family do not know where the child is
  - iv. Assign someone to stay with parent(s)
- b. Call 911
  - i. Assign someone to meet the responding 911 emergency unit
  - ii. Assure that all nursery care staff remain in the nursery

- c. Recruit assistance to
  - i. Assign areas of the building to be searched
    - 1. Request reports back to you
    - 2. Check off assignments upon reports back
  - ii. Search all areas even if told by others that areas have been searched
    - 1. Outdoor perimeters of the building and all grounds
    - 2. Between ALL parked vehicles
    - 3. Into and through the tree row South of parking lot
    - 4. All rest rooms
    - 5. Hallway and rooms from nursery to office areas
    - 6. Office areas
    - 7. Hallway and rooms directly from nursery to narthex
    - 8. Hallway and rooms from nursery through the Education wing
  - iii. If child is still missing, request that the worship service be interrupted, search pews, altar guild sacristy, choir loft

### 3. **SICKNESS / HEALTH ISSUES** (should have locations listed)

- a. Commonly: fainting, falling, cuts/bleeding, heart attack / stroke symptoms, serious breathing stress
- b. Determine if a call to 911 is required
  - i. Be prepared, or assign someone, to meet the responding 911 emergency unit
- c. If moving the person is reasonable, offer assistance, wheelchair, relocation to as private an area as possible
- d. Request help from any medical personnel present (go to microphone)
- e. Take First Aid Kit(s) to the person
- f. Subsequently, if person or family members are unable to drive,
  - i. Attempt to ensure that rides can be made available
  - ii. Offer to transport their car home, if needed

### 4. **SEVERE WEATHER**

- a. Assign persons to:
  - i. Move children / all classrooms / away from windows
  - ii. (Two persons) to keep moving around the building to listen for unattended crying children or any injuries
  - iii. Secure areas of building
    - 1. Close hallway doors
    - 2. Request that people leave the sanctuary to narthex, hallways, Education wing
    - 3. Extinguish candles
    - 4. Move/pull into place as many Education wing collapsible walls as possible

- iv. Unplug
  - 1. Sanctuary organ
  - 2. Public address control panel
  - 3. Kitchen appliances
  - 4. Office computers, copiers, etc.
- v. Power failure after dark
  - 1. Station volunteers at the end of each hallway with flashlights
- b. Assure that elderly and/or special needs persons have seating
- c. Call 911 at the first sign of any building damage, fire, smoke

**5. DISRUPTIVE / EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED PERSON(S)**

- a. Quickly assign a third person to seek other help (medical, counselors, law enforcement/fire personnel, Stephen Ministers already in the building)
- b. Two ushers respond
  - i. One usher (primary) approach the person
    - 1. Secondary usher always keeping some distance
    - 2. Secondary usher always in view, not speaking, never letting primary usher and person out of sight
  - ii. Primary usher offer to accompany the person to the office area
  - iii. Primary usher attempt to engage in a conversation
    - 1. Ask, "How can I assist you?"
    - 2. Offer telephone for the person to call someone to help them
    - 3. Offer coffee / water
  - iv. Anticipate the arrival of a trained person
    - 1. Ask the person in need, "May he/she join us here for a minute to speak with you?"
  - v. If the person in need is unrelenting and unable to calm down during any of the steps above, secondary usher call 911
    - 1. Assign someone to meet the Emergency Unit
    - 2. Secondary usher return to the primary location ASAP

**6. PROVIDE AN OVERALL CARING ENVIRONMENT**

- a. Always be attentive for persons, alone, in tears or apparently lingering with signs of emotional tension/stress
- b. Introduce yourself, ask his/her name
- c. Offer conversation or making a 'connection' with a pastor or other care giver
- d. Offer to 'walk' the person to the 'connection'
- e. If offers are rejected, reply in some way similar to, "I am honored to have met you. May God's peace be with you."