

A Publication of the
**National Wildfire
Coordinating Group**

Sponsored by
United States
Department of Agriculture

United States
Department of Interior

National Association of
State Foresters

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT



PMS 926
DRAFT

January, 2005

Agency Administrator: _____

Agency Name & Location: _____

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to assist Agency Administrators in dealing with critical incidents. A critical incident may be defined as a fatality or other event that can have serious long-term adverse effects on the agency, its employees and their families or the community.

Although fire incidents inspired this document, it also has application to other types of incidents.

The Agency Administrator is the highest-ranking agency line officer with direct responsibility for the personnel involved in the incident (for example, BLM District Manager, Park Superintendent, Forest Supervisor, Refuge Manager, BIA Agency Superintendent or State land manager). Through effective, efficient, and timely leadership, Agency Administrators are responsible for the overall management of critical incidents within their jurisdiction.

This document includes a series of checklists to guide an Agency Administrator through those difficult and chaotic days that follow a death, serious injury, or other critical or highly visible event. **THE TIME TO USE IT IS NOW!!!** It is designed for Agency Administrators to review in detail before a critical incident occurs, during the actual management of the incident, and after the incident activity has taken place. It is not intended to take the place of local emergency plans or other detailed guidance that may be available but should be used in conjunction with those and other references as well as the appendices that are included here. Terms that may be unfamiliar to some users are defined in the Glossary (Appendix 1).

The Critical Incident Management Worksheet (Appendix 2) was designed as a working tool to assist Agency Administrators with the chronological steps in managing the incident.

Model Initial Response Plan (Appendix 3) is provided as a template to assist Agency Administrators.

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

APPENDICES

1. Glossary
2. Critical Incident Management Worksheet
3. Agency Reporting Log
4. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Resource List
5. Communicating Effectively With Families

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is a list of information and/or sites that may be helpful in your respective situation. This is not an exhaustive list; you are encouraged to become familiar with these sites, obtain these documents, and any others as needed.

1. Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook and Supplements
(www.nifc.gov/)
2. BLM Employee Casualty Guide for Managers and Supervisors
(www.blm.gov/nhp/efoia/nhrmc/2000/IB/HRIB2000-108.pdf)
3. Crisis Communications, Devon Dougherty, 1992, Walker & Co.
4. Strategic Communications for Wildland Fire Management (video tape/discussion guide) (www.nifc.gov/)
5. Local Emergency Guidelines Operations Plans
6. Agency and Local Agency-Specific
7. National Interagency Mobilization Guide
(www.nifc.gov/news/mobguide/index.html)
8. Geographic Area Mobilization Guides

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Cont.

9. Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (US Department of Justice)
(www.cfda.gov/public/viewprog.asp?progid=525)
10. National Fallen Firefighters' Foundation
(www.firehero.org/)
11. American Red Cross
(www.redcross.org/)
12. National Association of State Foresters
(www.stateforesters.org/)
13. FEMA
(www.fema.gov/)
14. U.S. Fire Administration
(<http://usfa.fema.gov/>)
15. Office of Aircraft Services
(www.oas.gov/)

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
A-1	Determine what types of incidents are likely to occur on lands for which you are responsible	
A-2	Identify agencies that have statutory/ jurisdictional responsibilities for incidents	
A-3	Develop local preparedness plans to guide emergency response to critical incidents.	
A-4	Pre-plan incident response and Incident Command System (ICS) organizational structure.	
A-5	Develop local interagency operating guides and initial response and notification procedures.	
A-6	Provide training and conduct exercises focusing on interagency cooperation, coordination, and incident management.	
A-7	Ensure that procedures are in place to assist in the effective and efficient processing of overall administrative requirements and coordination between concurrent activities (investigations, CISM, etc).	
A-8	Ensure initial incident management personnel are qualified, organized, and clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.	

A AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
A-9	Provide for and emphasize the treatment and care of survivors, co-workers and their families. If possible, explain the types of investigations likely to occur, and the possible timeframes involved.	
A-10	Determine the scope of the incident, the jurisdictions involved, and implement Initial Response Plan.	
A-11	Determine the level of management required and develop the appropriate organization with involved jurisdictions.	
A-12	Determine the capabilities and limitations of your organization and request assistance.	
A-13	Provide a delegation of authority and objectives for the management of the incident.	
A-14	Implement reporting/notification procedures (see Section C). Participate personally whenever possible.	
A-15	Personally contact the Agency Administrator of the victim's home duty station with as much information as possible; have names and telephone numbers of contacts.	

A AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
A-16	Initiate investigation following the process outlined in Section H. Brief the investigation team(s). Facilitate and support the investigation as requested. Ensure coordination among and between investigation teams (accident, OSHA, IG, administrative) and CISM activities.	
A-17	Implement Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). When ordering, recommend CISM members include agency personnel familiar with the work being performed at the time of the incident. Brief CISM team members with any special considerations regarding the team, crew, or unit involved in or affected by the incident.	
A-18	Monitor the management of the incident. Be readily available to provide direction, guidance, and support as needed. Ensure investigation and CISM team leaders are coordinating efforts to minimize adverse impacts to affected individuals.	

A AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	After	Action/Assignment/Remarks
A-19	Ensure that key individuals (families, survivors, and other appropriate individuals) are briefed on the investigation report prior to its release.	
A-20	Continue your personal support of, and active involvement in, the CISM process.	
A-21	Ensure that administrative requirements are expedited; compensation for injury and claims, benefits, etc.	
A-22	Conduct a review of the management of the incident. Develop recommendations for improvement and incorporate into existing plans.	

A AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
B-1	Ensure that all victims receive aid and comfort, and that emergency assistance has been requested.	
B-2	In case of serious injury or death to a Native American, immediately contact the home tribal leadership for cultural considerations.	
B-3	Secure accident site to preserve evidence and protect personal and government property.	
B-4	Gather and verify initial information: Who – Full names of victims, including nicknames. When – Approximate time and date of accident. Where – Location of accident (closest town, jurisdiction, or other geographic information). Why – Actual or suspected cause of injury, death, etc.	
B-5	Implement local emergency operational plan and critical incident communication procedures.	
B-6	Ensure that local law enforcement officials have been notified (Phone # _____).	
B-7	Ensure that communications are controlled to guarantee privacy until next of kin are notified. Instruct incident personnel not to use communication methods that could compromise privacy, and not to use names of victims if communications can be monitored.	

B INITIAL ACTION CHECKLIST

----- Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
B-8	Communicate with the victim's home unit until their liaison arrives to coordinate with the on-scene agency.	
B-9	Obtain victim's personal emergency information from agency personnel office.	
B-10	Begin notification process. (See C-2)	
B-11	Initiate (through appropriate contacts) and manage applicable investigation processes. (See Section-H)	

B

INITIAL ACTION CHECKLIST

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
C-1	Clarify agency process for reporting and investigating serious injury or death, including procedure for reporting an entrapment.	
C-2	<p>Develop contact list for reporting process (See Sample Agency Reporting Log, Appendix 3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the National Interagency Coordination Center (# _____) -Individual agency follow-up still required by Agency Administrator • Safety Manger (# _____) • Aviation Manager if aircraft is involved; follow agency protocol (# _____) • Agency Director (# _____) • Nearest OSHA area office (within eight hours) (# _____) • Agency Public Affairs Office (# _____) • Regional or Field solicitor (DOI) or Office of General Counsel (FS) (# _____) • Servicing Personnel Officer – review victim’s records and beneficiary designation; provide detailed statement of benefits. (# _____) • Office of Inspector General, if waste, fraud, or abuse is indicated. (# _____) • CISM coordinator or provider. (# _____) 	

C

REPORTING & NOTIFICATION

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	--------	---------------------------

AGENCY REPORTING

C-3	Begin reporting process. (See C-2)	
C-4	Prior to official notification, do not use victim’s names over communication devices that could be monitored.	
C-5	Coordinate closely with coroner/medical examiner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not release names to news media or others until families have been notified 	
C-6	Immediately notify Information Officer when family and other internal notification is complete, so public release of information may proceed in a timely manner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial public release of names, home units, etc., will be made by Information Officer to preserve integrity of notification process • Recognize that the impact to local communities and others may be significant, depending on the nature of the incident. Consider establishing networks to facilitate information flow to these groups and include them in Agency-sponsored events, if appropriate • Provide information to injured surviving employees • State only facts; DO NOT SPECULATE Keep employees informed about details of the incident as well as schedule of events to follow 	

C

REPORTING & NOTIFICATION

 Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
NOTIFICATION		
C-7	Establish process/protocol for notification of next of kin in case of serious injury or death; coordinate with local authorities	

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
NOTIFICATION		
C-8	Implement process, either Agency or local authorities, for notification of next of kin. Be aware of "nontraditional" family situations.	
C-9	In case of serious injury or death to a Native American, immediately contact the home tribal leadership for cultural considerations.	
C-10	When the victim is an employee, the highest-level manager immediately available in the family's geographic area, should do family notifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompaniment by friends of the victim or family liaison may be helpful; determine if circumstances warrant the presence of religious, medical or psychological professionals • Follow agency or professional guidelines or enlist help from law enforcement, trained peer counselors, or other experienced professionals 	

C REPORTING & NOTIFICATION

----- Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
C-11	When the victim is a member of the public, a contactor, or an employee of a contractor, notification should be made by law enforcement officials, i.e., sheriff’s department, coroner’s office, etc.	
C-12	Inform next of kin in private. If at their home, make sure you are inside residence before giving notification. Stay at eye level.	
C-13	Have as many facts about the incident as you can; details will be very important. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, where, when, how? • Where is the deceased or injured now? • What was the emergency response, if any? 	
C-14	Avoid vague language. Use “dead” or “death” or “died”. Don’t skirt around the “D” words.	
C-15	Anticipate a wide range of reactions and emotional responses.	
C-16	Explain the role of the family liaison.	
C-17	Stay until you feel it is appropriate to leave.	
C-18	Initiate a process for the return of personal effects. Personal effects may not be returned immediately if necessary as evidence.	
C-19	Alert families and home units that information is being released to news media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them to continue notification process as quickly as possible; coworkers and extended family should not hear news from the media • Suggest “telephone trees” • Do what you can to keep information flow to the families ahead of the media 	
C-20	See Appendix 5 “Communicating Effectively With Families.”	

C

REPORTING & NOTIFICATION

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The family liaison serves as the primary contact between agency and family, facilitates information requests, provides support to family members, and asks for assistance from specific administrative subject-matter experts as necessary.

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
D-1	Identify internal and external resources that are available and may be needed in dealing with the family: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief counselor • Peer supporters • Administrative expertise • CISM resources 	
D-2	Identify internal policies that the family liaison needs to be aware of. For example, what funeral costs would be covered; procedures for processing personnel papers; what advice/counsel should be given for filing claims; etc. Put together a packet of information with applicable forms.	

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
D-3	Needs of the injured, survivors, and family are paramount.	
D-4	Select a steady, level-headed individual who is a good listener and communicator, or who is requested by the family, as liaison.	
D-5	Liaison should be an employee of the agency.	
D-6	Consider either a peer supporter or grief counselor who is trained in family liaison work.	
D-7	Carefully weigh the pros (immediate rapport/trust) and cons (emotional involvement/lack of objectivity) of assigning a family liaison who is a friend of the family.	

D **FAMILY LIAISON**

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
D-8	Try to have “local” people work with the families if possible.	
D-9	Coordinate communication among liaisons.	
D-10	Assign one liaison per family, but consider the need for other individuals to assist.	
D-11	Allow the selected liaison the opportunity to decline the assignment.	
D-12	Recognize that this could be a long-term commitment, but also consider that liaison’s need to limit his/her time and emotional investment.	
D-13	The family liaison should be available to the family within the first 24 hours.	
D-14	Consider need for appropriate representative(s) at locations where family members may be present – hospitals, helicopter/ambulance shuttle points, etc., to assist with their needs and deal with media.	
D-15	<p>Family liaison should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally before visiting with the family • Wearing a uniform may be appropriate • Have another person accompany you on your first visit • Anticipate questions and be prepared • Keep an ongoing record of activities (diary) • Be accessible to the family at all times • Do not ASSUME you know what the families and survivors want –ASK • Do not burden family with unnecessary requests or demands 	

D

FAMILY LIAISON

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
D-16	Facilitate family attendance at agency sponsored events (memorials, etc.).	
D-17	Consider facilitating inter-family/survivor/co-worker networks.	
D-18	Secure access to Employee Assistance Program for family members; provide web address, if necessary.	

#	After	Action/Assignment/Remarks
D-19	Continue working with family members concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims and benefits • Information requests, i.e., media interviews • Visiting site of incident • Funeral arrangements 	
D-20	Ensure that family liaison workers have access to debriefing and stress counseling.	
D-21	When investigation reports are released, make subject-matter experts available to answer families’ questions and concerns.	
D-22	Continue to communicate regularly with families, but establish a mutually agreed-upon conclusion to official involvement.	

D

FAMILY LIAISON

 Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
E-1	Ensure that Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) protocols and resources are in place prior to the occurrence of a critical incident. Attempting to implement a program or response in the aftermath of an incident is difficult and often ineffective.	
E-2	Identify Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and its capabilities in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief Counseling • Family Support 	
E-3	Identify local/regional CISM teams.	
E-4	Identify national CISM teams. (See Appendix 4 for a list of recognized/experienced teams.)	
E-5	Contact CISM resources to discuss activation/capabilities/costs .	
E-6	Conduct training for all employees in stress management and critical incident stress awareness.	

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
E-7	Activate CISM resources (peer support and mental health professionals) to respond to incident. When ordering, recommend CISM members include agency personnel familiar with the work being performed at the time of the incident. Brief CISM team members with any special considerations regarding the team, crew, or unit involved in or affected by the incident.	
E-8	In case of serious injury or death of a Native American, immediately contact the home tribal leadership for cultural considerations.	

E CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

 Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
E-9	Role and function of peer support during incident: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide one-on-one peer support for incident survivors, coworkers, and others • Act as peer advocate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure proper rest/food - facilitate information flow • Conduct defusing for victims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allow “venting” of initial feelings and emotions - use emphasis on stress education • Serve as or assist family liaison 	
E-10	Coordinate formal Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) logistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location away from incident and media • Transportation • Refreshments • Lodging 	
E-11	Ensure that CISM resources can handle the magnitude of debriefing requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defusing: usually within the first 24 hours; limit to 20 people per session • Debriefings: usually 48-72 hours after the incident; limit to 20 people per session • Ensure confidentiality • Ensure CISM activities are coordinated with on-going or impending investigation activities 	

E CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

 Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	After	Action/Assignment/Remarks
E-12	Provide CISD within 48-72 hours for employees involved in the incident. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relieve from external responsibilities • Primary recipients should be those directly involved in the incident; i.e., survivors, rescue workers, incident management team members, dispatchers, etc. • Keep crews together if possible • Hold <u>separate</u> sessions for people involved in immediate incident operations (survivors and rescuers) and outside peers/co-workers • Provide cultural peer support as necessary 	
E-13	Provide information on follow-up resources; EAP, etc.	
E-14	Monitor stress reactions and cumulative stress in agency employees, especially during: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of investigative reports and incident management review reports • Anniversary dates • Memorial services 	
E-15	Continue to provide CISD for all employees involved in the incident, and any others that request or need it.	

E CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
F-1	Develop critical incident communication procedures as part of a local interagency emergency operations plan. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency jurisdictions • Directory of local/regional/national support • Directory of agency experts (experienced crisis communication “coaches”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some agencies may have designated crisis communications teams - experienced crisis communicators may be available under contract or through special hiring authorities • Key spokespersons • List of communication tools and resources needed • Process for setting up communication center • Communication process for incident investigation 	
F-2	Create fact sheets and bio-sketches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency • Community • Generic format for additional fact sheets/bio-sketches • Glossary of terms 	
F-3	Create media contact lists; include phone and fax numbers.	
F-4	Identify technical expertise to produce maps and graphics.	
F-5	Ensure that Information Officers receive appropriate formal training, including trainee assignments, and participate in simulation exercises.	
F-6	List key internal and external contacts in local interagency crisis communication plan; include phone and fax numbers.	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

 Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
F-7	Research protocol considerations and address them in crisis communication plan.	
F-8	Immediately activate communication procedures and assemble trained, experienced information team, using established procedures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place orders for experienced communication people; this is vital • Local-unit public affairs officer may serve as team leader, depending on experience with crisis communications • Set up communication center facilities • Publicize telephone number and location • Consider establishing an “800” phone number to facilitate information flow Develop communication strategy	
F-9	Victim/family considerations take precedence.	
F-10	Respond quickly and compassionately.	
F-11	Maintain your personal availability; stay involved.	
F-12	Confirm roles and responsibilities, and ensure the appropriate coordination occurs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit Public Affairs Officer • Information Officer • Primary incident Information Officer if critical incident is part of another incident • Co-operator Information Officer(s) 	
F-13	Establish approval process for release of information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate primary spokesperson for external release of information 	
F-14	Brief receptionists, dispatchers, and others on routing/handling of incoming calls and visitors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Public Affairs Officer assistance at dispatch centers and reception areas, if appropriate 	
F-15	Document all events, contact, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronology • Contact Log • Photos 	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
F-16	Maintain status board of confirmed, releasable information; conduct transition briefings for incoming staff.	
F-17	Have maps and graphics available.	
F-18	<p>Designate lead for <u>internal</u> and <u>interagency</u> communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make initial contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - appropriate Agency and Department headquarters officials - top-level Agency Administrator for geographic area - Public Affairs Officer for geographic area - Field Solicitor of Office of General Counsel - Servicing Personnel Officer • Establish process for distributing updated information at all levels of the organization. • Maintain communication with others involved (survivors, etc.) 	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
F-19	<p>Be prepared to respond to media inquires within minutes. Use the media to deliver important messages to the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an initial prepared statement • Show concern • Say what is being done and how quickly the agency responded • Tell what resources responded • Give any verified, releasable facts that are available • Report current status • Do not speculate or talk off the record; STATE ONLY FACTS • Confirm the obvious • Discuss initiation of investigation/review, if appropriate • Stress that safety of rescue crews, investigation team, community, and others is paramount • Mention environmental impacts if appropriate • Thank cooperators <p>Inform the public what they can do to help</p>	
F-20	Make immediate contact with local media and develop positive relationships with them.	
F-21	Schedule regular press briefings/updates.	
F-22	<u>When information has been approved for release, tell the media what you know when you know it.</u> Names of victims should be release as soon as next of kin have been notified.	
F-23	Explain agency response activities, including interagency roles and cooperation.	
F-24	Ensure technical experts (safety, aviation, fire behavior, etc.) are available and prepared for media interviews.	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
F-25	Use media to get secondary messages to the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for volunteers, along w/contact point if appropriate • Safety messages • Need for cooperation, road closures, etc. • Fire restrictions • Prescribed fire and wildland/urban interface issues 	
F-26	Provide and coordinate media access to incident site in cooperation with Incident Management Team (IMT) and investigation team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief media on incident site and air space restrictions • Consider media pool arrangement 	
F-27	Anticipate media's needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical (phones, work areas, etc.) • Photos/biography(s) of victim(s) • Deadlines • Protective gear • Photo and video opportunities • Interviews 	

COMMUNITY

F-28	Assess community information needs.	
F-29	Personally provide briefings at visible locations (include affected landowners, permittees, etc.).	
F-30	Take advantage of existing newsletters and other established communication tools.	
F-31	Keep the community and affected landowners and users informed and involved; establish a community liaison position.	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
FAMILIES/SURVIVORS		
F-32	Family considerations always come first.	
F-33	Provide information officer support, through family liaison, for <u>victims, families, and survivors</u> – local/distant/hospitals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if they want to talk to media • Advise designated family spokespersons about their entitlements, anticipated questions, etc. • Coordinate requests to minimize impact 	
F-34	Protect the rights of those who do not want media contact.	
F-35	Provide media whatever access is possible at funerals and memorial services, and still maintain the dignity of the ceremony and the privacy of the family.	
F-36	Prepare condolence letters (within 24 hours if possible). Coordinate at all levels in the agency.	

OTHER LIASIONS

F-37	Coordinate and work with IMT.	
F-38	Communicate with other ongoing incidents as appropriate.	
F-39	Use internal bulletin boards and other tools to communicate with assigned incident personnel, other local and distant employees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post articles from local and regional newspapers (buy papers or copy from web sites) 	
F-40	Establish TV/video-recording capability.	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	-----------------	---------------------------

KEY OFFICIALS

F-41	Personally notify appropriate officials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency top management • Governor • Mayor • County Commissioners • Members of Congress • Others 	
F-42	Ensure correct protocol is followed. Review agency specific policy for correct protocols.	
F-43	Prepare briefing material, facts/statistics about area, talking points, or speeches if appropriate.	
F-44	Assign liaisons/escorts.	
F-45	Arrange for transportation.	
F-46	Schedule and facilitate press conferences(s) if desired.	

INVESTIGATION

F-47	Provide mechanism for keeping them involved/informed.	
F-48	Develop a separate communications plan for investigation.	
F-49	Develop a checklist for release of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By whom (key spokesperson) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consider sensitivity, training, credibility, experience. • What (key messages) • When (concurrent releases?) • Where (concurrent releases?) • How (press conferences) • To who (target audiences) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agency - public - family 	
F-50	Brief incident and home-unit personnel and families before reports are released.	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	After	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	-------	---------------------------

INTERNAL

F-51	Continue to share information.	
F-52	Provide closure and transition back to regular jobs.	
F-53	Prepare thank-you’s and commendations.	
F-54	Complete documentation.	

COMMUNITY

F-55	Evaluate public information activities; adjust communication plan as appropriate.	
F-56	Close out with those involved.	
F-57	Thank those who helped (letters, newspaper notice, newsletter, radio spots, etc.).	
F-58	Communicate local resource considerations (rehab, etc.).	
F-59	Address continuing impacts – visitors, traffic, media, production companies, etc. (establish follow-up committee if needed)	

FAMILIES/SURVIVORS

F-60	Facilitate return visits to the site if appropriate.	
F-61	Develop mechanism for follow-up to be sure all their needs have been met.	

KEY OFFICIALS

F-62	Close out or send follow-up information.	
F-63	Send thank you letters (if appropriate).	

F INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	--------	---------------------------

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

G-1	Review and establish Delegations of Authority, Memorandums of Understandings	
-----	--	--

PERSONNEL/COMPENSATION ITEMS

G-2	Establish a local-unit resource list of resident experts in: personnel claims, tort claims, and Office of Workers’ Compensation Program (OWCP) processes and procedures. Establish a list of all contract medical facilities available.	
G-3	<p>Ensure that Official Personnel Files and temporary employee files are periodically reviewed for accurate “in case of emergency” information (must have street address; no PO Box) and that this information is easily accessible in an emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual hires become agency employees and fall under the same guidelines • The accuracy of the information on the Fire Time Report is crucial for the same reason 	
G-4	<p>Establish a reference guide that describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits available for type of employment • How to file a claim • When to contact the Social Security Administration • A contact person and telephone number to call with additional questions 	

PROCUREMENT/FISCAL ITEMS

G-5	<p>Annually review for accuracy and expiration Memorandums of Understanding, Interagency Agreements, Blanket Purchase Agreements, contracts, and other procurement documents that support the of serious injuries and fatalities. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local law enforcement agencies • Medical facilities. management • Counseling; CISD services • Lodging facilities <p>Update and renegotiate as necessary.</p>	
-----	--	--

G

ADMINISTRATION

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	Before, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
G-6	<p>Establish a reference source for all agreements within the local area, including point of contact/authorized individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should contain an index of local experts who can be contacted for assistance • Would correspond with the Agreement reference, but should contain more sources 	

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
G-7	Develop additional Delegations of Authority, MOU’s, IA’s, and other interagency agreements as required.	
G-8	Evaluate unit’s added workload and request assistance as needed.	
G-9	Request help from people who have experience in this type of incident (“coaches”).	
G-10	Work closely with top-level agency personnel and others to expedite all paperwork for Department of Justice and OWCP.	
G-11	Work closely with agency law enforcement officials to facilitate gathering reports and other information from the sheriff and coroner.	
G-12	Designate a records person familiar with documentation needs and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regulations.	
G-13	Designate a single source for administrative record keeping and tracking throughout incident.	
G-14	For incident-unit employee(s), designate a personnel representative to assist families with necessary paperwork and answer their questions. Make these people known to family liaison and other agency officials.	
G-15	Appoint one individual to coordinate and be responsible for securing, gathering and returning personal items, including vehicles and items from lockers and desks.	

G

ADMINISTRATION

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	-----------------	---------------------------

PERSONNEL/COMPENSATION ITEMS

G-16	Designate a personnel representative to coordinate with other agency personnel staffs.	
G-17	Provide a benefits package to families so they are aware of all entitlements.	

PROCUREMENT/FISCAL ITEMS

G-18	Identify a fiscal representative to give advice on administrative questions associated with paying travel costs of family members, costs of transporting bodies, funerals, memorial funds, counseling and/or CISD for family members, and any other funding questions that may arise.	
------	---	--

#	After	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	-------	---------------------------

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

G-19	Identify a contact person and repository, i.e., FOIA, for information dissemination.	
------	--	--

PERSONNEL/COMPENSTION ITEMS

G-20	Monitor the receipt of checks and other worker's compensation items through personnel offices involved.	
G-21	Provide process for filing tort claims , if asked.	

PROCUREMENT/FISCAL ITEMS

G-22	Remain in contact with fiscal and contracting experts assigned during the incident for any unanswered questions that come up.	
------	---	--

G

ADMINISTRATION

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

#	Before	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	--------	---------------------------

INVESTIGATION TEAMS

H-1	Develop organizational charts and plans for the most likely incidents, as part of the emergency operations plan.	
-----	--	--

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL JURISDICTIONS

H-2	Become familiar with laws and regulations pertaining to local, county, and state jurisdictions, and their roles and responsibilities for investigating critical incidents.	
H-3	Obtain, review and maintain agency and interdepartmental accident investigation guidelines and procedures found in agency manuals and wildland fire entrapment reporting and other publications.	
H-4	Meet and develop rapport with key administrators in the local, State and Federal jurisdictions; i.e., sheriff, police chief, etc.	
H-5	Develop, review annually, and revise (if necessary) agreements with local cooperators; spell out roles and responsibilities for critical incident investigations.	
H-6	Conduct joint training and simulation exercises, where possible, with cooperators.	
H-7	Participate in local emergency response and/or public safety council meetings on a regular basis.	

H INVESTIGATION

 Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

#	During	Action/Assignment/Remarks
INVESTIGATION TEAMS		
H-8	Ensure the investigation team received a thorough briefing about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened -review initial report • Jurisdictions involved • Current activities -search and rescue -investigations • List of personnel involved (injuries, fatalities, etc.) -status -location -how to contact -agency • Key officials • Cooperators • Safety officers Criminal/civil implications	
H-9	If a fatality is involved, a higher-level Agency Administrator will likely appoint an Accident Investigation Team, however, the local Agency Administrator must be prepared to host and cooperate with the investigation team.	
H-10	Clarify and agree upon roles, responsibilities, authorities, and objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate under IMT or stand alone • Determine Delegations of Authority • Determine how public information will be handled and designate a spokesperson (See section F) • Provide logistical and administrative support Ensure close coordination among and between investigation(s) activities and CISD efforts	
H-11	Assign an agency law enforcement officer and FOIA specialist as part of the investigation team.	
H-12	Ensure safety alerts and other information updates are issued throughout the investigation process (internally and publicly as appropriate).	

H INVESTIGATION

----- Be prepared! Don’t assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#	During, cont...	Action/Assignment/Remarks
H-13	Coordinate with local, State and Federal jurisdictions during the investigative process, as appropriate.	
H-14	Invite local, State and Federal jurisdictions to participate in strategy meetings and planning sessions.	
H-15	Request a local, State, and Federal law enforcement liaison to work with investigation team.	

#	After	Action/Assignment/Remarks
---	-------	---------------------------

INVESTIGATION TEAMS

H-16	Ensure investigation team closes -out with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Administrator • Local, State and Federal authorities • IMT • Agency officials at appropriate levels 	
H-17	Brief incident and home-unit personnel and families prior to releasing the report.	
H-18	Follow up on recommendations.	

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL JURISDICTIONS

H-19	Ensure local, State, and Federal jurisdictions are involved in close-out and review.	
H-20	Obtain copies of local, State, and Federal agencies' reports.	

H INVESTIGATION

----- Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others. -----

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Purpose:

The purpose of the internal review is to document the actions taken in *the management of the incident*, evaluate their effectiveness, and make recommendations for improvement. It would not duplicate the investigation report, which focuses on events and actions that led to the critical incident and the identification of causal factors.

#	After	Action/Assignment/Remarks
I-1	The Agency Administrator will initiate an interagency review of how the incident was managed.	
I-2	The review will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address how well the agency worked with local, State and Federal cooperators.• Determine if the local emergency plan was effective• Identify weak areas• Assist in updating plan	

The report that results from the review will include, as a minimum, an accident overview, findings, recommendations, and implementation actions and responsibilities.

I

INTERNAL REVIEW

Be prepared! Don't assume that critical incidents only happen to others.

GLOSSARY

1. **Agency Administrator**

Line officer (or designee) of the agency or jurisdiction that has responsibility for the incident. These usually include: NPS Park Superintendent, BIA Agency Superintendent, USFS Forest Supervisor, BLM District Manager, FWS Refuge Manager, State Forest Officer, Fire Chief.

2. **Casual Employee or Hire**

A person hired and compensated under the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers.

3. **Crisis Communication Coaches**

Agency employees who have actual experience dealing with a critical incident and are qualified as incident information officers.

4. **Critical Incident**

A fatality or other event that can have serious long-term adverse effects on the agency, its employees and their families, or the community.

5. **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)**

The process in which teams of professional and peer counselors provide emotional and psychological support to incident personnel who are or have been involved in a critical (highly stressful) incident.

6. **Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)**

The process by which managers incorporate stress education, formal debriefings, defusings, family liaison work, etc., one-on-one intervention and follow-up.

7. **Defusing**

This is an informal session held immediately following the incident, within 24 hours. It is peer support led, focuses on initial venting of feelings, and stress education. Group size should be limited to 20 people and the session should last approximately one hour.

8. **Delegation of Authority**

A statement provided to the Incident Commander by the agency executive delegating authority and assigning responsibility. The delegation of authority can include objectives, priorities, expectations, constraints and other considerations or guidelines as needed. Many agencies require written delegation of authority to be given to incident commanders prior to their assuming command on larger incidents.

9. **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

An agency contracted program that provides employees and their families' access to a variety of counseling and other support services in certain situations.

10. **Entrapment**

A situation where personnel are unexpectedly caught in a fire-behavior related life-threatening position and planned escape routes or safety zones are absent, inadequate, or compromised. An entrapment may or may not include deployment of a fire shelter for its intended purpose. These situations may or may not result in injury. They include "near misses".

GLOSSARY, cont'd

11. Family Liaison

The primary contact between the agency and the victim's family.

12. FTR Fire Time Report (Form OF-288)

The official time reporting form for recording hours worked on an incident.

13. Incident Command System (ICS)

a standardized on-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

14. Incident Management Team (IMT)

The incident commander, and appropriate general and command staff personnel, assigned to an incident.

15. OWCP – Office of Workers' Compensation Program

The Federal office, under the Department of Labor, charged with administering the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, which authorizes medical care and compensation for periods of disability for Federal employees who sustain traumatic injuries and occupational diseases in the performance of duty.

16. Peer Support

Employees or individuals trained in peer counseling CISM process, including CISD and defusings.

17. Telephone Tree

A predetermined system for calling groups of people. Starting with a primary contact and working down through the list, each person has a preassigned responsibility for making specific contacts.

18. Tort

The Federal Tort Claims Act is the avenue a private individual has to file a claim against an employee of the Federal government or the Federal government in general.

ACRONYMS

BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CISD	Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
CISM	Critical Incident Stress Management
DOI	Department of Interior
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FS	USDA Forest Service
FWS	US Fish and Wildlife Services
ICS	Incident Command System
IMT	Incident Management Team
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NPS	National Park Service
OSHA	Occupational Safety and health Administration
OWCP	Office of Workers' Compensation Program
PO	Post Office
Q&A	Question and Answer
USDA	United States Department of Agricultural
USDI	United States Department of Interior

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2 is designed to be used as a worksheet (both in preparation for and in management of a critical incident) by Agency Administrators and others with oversight responsibilities during a critical incident. Every office should ensure that the “before” actions are initially completed by a specific date and then updated each year. The worksheet may also be used as a guide in conducting practice exercises.

It is recommended that, as part of the “before” preparation as well as during the management of a critical incident, units insert specific local information into this worksheet, i.e., key contacts, phone numbers, additional steps based on local emergency plan, names of local employees and others who would be assigned specific responsibilities, etc.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	Before	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES				
A-1	Determine what types of incidents are likely to occur on lands for which you are responsible.			
A-2	Identify those agencies that have statutory/ jurisdictional responsibilities for those incidents.			
A-3	Develop preparedness plans to guide emergency response to critical incidents.			
A-4	Pre-plan incident response and ICS organizational structure.			
A-5	Develop local interagency operating guides and initial response and notification procedures.			
A-6	Provide training and conduct exercises focusing on interagency cooperation, coordination and incident management.			
A-7	Ensure that procedures are in place to assist in the overall administrative requirements.			
A-8	Ensure initial incident management personnel are qualified and organized and clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.			
AGENCY REPORTING				
C-1	Clarify agency process for reporting and investigating serious injury or deaths including procedures for reporting entrapments.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	Before, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
AGENCY REPORTING, cont'd				
C-2	Develop contact list for reporting process (see sample Agency Reporting Log, Appendix 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the National Interagency Coordination Center (1-800-994-6312) - Individual agency follow-up still required by Agency Administrator. • Safety Manager (#_____). • Aviation Manager if aircraft is involved - follow agency protocol (#_____). • Agency Director (#_____). • Nearest OSHA area office (within eight hours) (#_____). • Agency Public Affairs Office (#_____). • Regional or Field Solicitor (DOI) or Office of General Counsel (FS) (#_____). • Servicing Personnel Officer - review victim's records and beneficiary designation; provide detailed statement of benefits (#_____). • Office of Inspector General, if waste, fraud or abuse is indicated (#_____). 			
NOTIFICATION				
C-7	Establish process/protocol for notification of next of kin in case of serious injury or death; coordinate with local authorities.			
FAMILY LIAISON				
D-1	Identify internal and external resources that are available and may be needed in dealing with the family: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief counselors • Peer supporters • Administrative expertise • CISM resources 			
D-2	Identify internal policies that family liaison needs to be aware of. For example, what funeral costs would be covered; procedures for processing personnel papers; what advice or should be given for filing claims, etc.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	Before, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT				
E-1	Ensure that Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) protocols and resources are in place prior to the occurrence of a critical incident. Attempting to implement a program or response in the aftermath of an incident is difficult and often ineffective.			
E-2	Identify Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and its capabilities in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief Counseling • Family Support 			
E-3	Identify local/regional CISM teams.			
E-4	Identify national CISM teams. (See Appendix 4 for a list of recognized/ experienced teams.)			
E-5	Contact CISM resources to discuss activation/capabilities/costs.			
E-6	Conduct training for all employees in stress management and critical incident stress awareness.			
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS				
F-1	Develop critical incident communication procedures as part of a local interagency emergency operations plan. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency jurisdictions. • Directory of local/regional/national support. • Directory of agency experts (experienced crisis communication “coaches”). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some agencies may have designated crisis communication teams. - Experienced crisis communicators may be available under contract or through special hiring authorities. • Key spokespersons. • List of communication tools and resources needed. • Process for setting up communication center. • Communication process for incident investigation. 			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	Before, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, cont'd				
F-2	Create fact sheets and bio-sketches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency • Community • Generic format for additional fact sheets/bio-sketches • Glossary of terms 			
F-3	Create media contact lists; include phone and fax numbers.			
F-4	Identify technical expertise to produce maps and graphics.			
F-5	Ensure information officers receive appropriate formal training, including trainee assignments, and participate in simulation exercises.			
F-6	List key internal and external contacts in local interagency crisis communication plan; include phone and fax numbers.			
F-7	Research protocol considerations and address them in crisis communication plan.			
ADMINISTRATION				
G-1	Review and establish Delegations of Authority, Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's), Memorandums of Agreement (MOA's), and other interagency agreements needed in the event of a critical incident.			
G-2	Establish a local-unit resource list of resident experts in: personal claims, tort claims, and Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP) processes and procedures. Establish a list of all contract medical facilities available.			
G-3	Ensure that Official Personnel Files and temporary employee files are periodically reviewed for accurate "in case of emergency" information (must have street address; no PO Box) and that this information is easily accessible in an emergency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual hires become agency employees and fall under the same guidelines. • The accuracy of the information on the Fire Time Report is crucial for the same reason. 			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	Before, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
ADMINISTRATION, cont'd				
G-4	Establish a reference guide that describes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits available for type of employment. • How to file a claim. • When the Social Security Administration should be contacted. • A contact person and telephone number to call with additional questions. 			
G-5	Annually review for accuracy and expiration Memorandums of Understanding, Memorandums of Agreement, Blanket Purchase Agreements, contracts, and other procurement documents that support the management of serious injuries and fatalities. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local law enforcement agencies. • Medical facilities. • Counseling; CISD services. • Lodging facilities. Update and renegotiate as necessary.			
G-6	Establish a reference source for all agreements within the local area, including point of contact/authorized individual. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should contain an index of local experts who can be contacted for assistance. • Would correspond with the Agreement reference, but should contain more sources. 			
INVESTIGATIONS				
H-1	Develop organizational charts and plans for the most likely incidents, as part of the emergency operations plan.			
H-2	Become familiar with laws/regulations pertaining to local/county/state jurisdictions and their roles/responsibilities for investigating critical incidents.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	Before, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INVESTIGATION, cont'd				
H-3	Review agency/interdepartmental (USDI and FS) accident investigation guidelines/procedures found in agency manuals, and wildland fire entrapment reporting/investigation procedures outlined in "Investigating Wildland Fire Entrapments", Missoula Technology Development Center Publication # 9551-2845-MTDC, and the Interagency Mobilization Guide, 25.6			
H-4	Meet /develop rapport with key administrators in the local, State, and Federal jurisdictions; i.e., sheriff, police chief, etc.			
H-5	Develop, review annually, and revise (if necessary) agreements with local cooperators that spell out roles and responsibilities for critical incident investigations.			
H-6	Conduct joint training and simulation exercises, where possible, with cooperators.			
H-7	Participate in local emergency response and/or public safety council meetings on a regular basis.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES				
A-9	Provide for and emphasize the treatment and care of survivors, co-workers, and their families.			
A-10	Determine the scope of the incident and the involved jurisdictions and implement Initial Response Plan.			
A-11	Determine the level of management required and develop the appropriate organization with involved jurisdictions.			
A-12	Determine the capabilities and limitations of your organization and request assistance.			
A-13	Provide a delegation of authority and objectives for the management of the incident.			
A-14	Implement reporting/notification procedures (see Section C). Participate personally whenever possible.			
A-15	Personally contact Agency Administrator for victim's home duty station with as much information as possible and names and telephone numbers of contacts.			
A-16	Initiate investigation following the process outlined in Section H. Brief investigation team. Facilitate and support investigation as requested.			
A-17	Implement Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM).			
A-18	Monitor the management of the incident. Be readily available to provide direction, guidance and support as needed.			
INITIAL ACTION CHECKLIST				
B-1	Ensure that all victims are receiving aid and comfort and that emergency assistance has been requested.			
B-2	In case of serious injury or death to a Native American, immediately contact the home tribal leadership for cultural considerations.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INITIAL ACTION CHECKLIST, cont'd				
B-4	Gather and verify initial information: Who - Full names of victims, including nicknames When - Approximate time and date of accident Why - Actual or suspected cause of injury, death, etc. Where - Location of accident (closest town, jurisdiction, or other geographic information)			
B-5	Implement local emergency operational plan and critical incident communication procedures.			
B-6	Ensure that local law enforcement officials have been notified (Phone # _____).			
B-7	Ensure that communications are controlled to guarantee privacy of names until next of kin are notified. Instruct incident personnel not to use communication methods that could compromise privacy and not to use names of victims if communications can be monitored.			
B-8	Communicate with victim's home unit until their liaison arrives to coordinate with the on-scene agency.			
B-9	Obtain victims' personal emergency information from agency personnel office.			
B-10	Begin notification process. (See C-2)			
B-11	Initiate (through appropriate contacts) and manage the investigation process. (See Section H)			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
AGENCY REPORTING				
C-3	Begin reporting process. (See C-2)			
C-4	Prior to official notification, do not use victims' names over communication devices that could be monitored.			
C-5	Coordinate closely with coroner medical examiner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not release names to news media or others until families have been notified. 			
C-6	Immediately notify Information Officer when family and other internal notification is complete so public release of information may proceed in a timely manner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial public release of names, home units, etc., will be made by Information Officer to preserve integrity of notification process • Recognize that impacts to local communities and others may be significant, depending on the nature of the incident. Consider establishing networks to facilitate information flow to these groups and include them in Agency-sponsored events if appropriate • Provide information to injured or surviving employees • State only facts; DO NOT SPECULATE • Keep employees informed about details of the incident as well as schedule of events to follow 			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
NOTIFICATION				
C-8	Implement process, either Agency or local authorities, for notification of next of kin. Be aware of “nontraditional” family situations.			
C-9	In case of serious injury or death to a Native American, immediately contact the home tribal leadership for cultural considerations.			
C-10	<p>When the victim is an employee, the highest-level manager immediately available in the family’s geographic area, should do family notifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompaniment by friends of the victim or family liaison may be helpful. • Determine if circumstances warrant the presence of religious, medical, or psychological professionals. • Follow agency or professional guidelines or enlist help from law enforcement, trained peer counselors, or other experienced professionals. 			
C-11	When the victim is a member of the public, a contractor, or an employee of a contractor, notification should be made by law enforcement officials, i.e., the sheriff’s department, coroner’s office, etc.			
C-12	Inform next of kin in private. If at their home, make sure you are inside residence before giving notification. Stay at eye level.			
C-13	<p>Have as many facts about the incident as you can. Details will be important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, where, when, how? • Where is the deceased or injured now? • What was the emergency response, if any? 			
C-14	Avoid vague language. Use “dead” or “death” or “died.” Don’t skirt around the “D” words.			
C-15	Anticipate a wide range of reactions and emotional responses.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
NOTIFICATION, cont'd				
C-16	Explain the role of the family liaison.			
C-17	Stay until you feel it is appropriate to leave.			
C-18	Initiate a process for the return of personal effects. Personal effects may not be returned immediately if necessary as evidence.			
C-19	Alert families and home units that information is being released to news media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them to continue notification process as quickly as possible. • Coworkers and extended family should not hear news from the media. • Suggest “telephone trees.” • Do what you can to keep information flow to the families ahead of the media. 			
C-20	See Appendix 5, “Communicating Effectively With Families.”			
FAMILY LIAISON				
D-3	Needs of the injured, survivors, and family are paramount.			
D-4	Select a steady, level-headed individual who is a good listener and communicator or who is requested by the family, as liaison.			
D-5	Liaison should be an employee of the agency.			
D-6	Consider either a peer supporter or grief counselor who is trained in family liaison work.			
D-7	Carefully weigh the pros (immediate rapport/trust) and cons (emotional involvement lack of objectivity) of assigning a family liaison who is a friend of the family.			
D-8	Try to have “local” people work with the families if possible.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
FAMILY LIAISON, cont'd				
D-9	Coordinate communication among liaisons.			
D-10	Assign one person per family, but consider the need for other individuals to assist.			
D-11	Allow the selected liaison the opportunity to decline the assignment.			
D-12	Recognize that this could be a long-term commitment, but also consider the liaison's need to limit his/her time and emotional investment.			
D-13	The family liaison should be available to the family within the first 24 hours.			
D-14	Consider need for appropriate representative(s) at locations where family members may be present--hospitals, helicopter/ambulance shuttle points, etc., to assist with their needs and deal with media.			
D-15	<p>Family liaison should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally before visiting with the family. • Wearing a uniform may be appropriate. • Have another person accompany you on first visit. • Anticipate questions and be prepared. • Keep an ongoing record of activities (diary). • Be accessible to the family at all times. • Do not ASSUME you know what family and survivors want--ASK. • Do not burden family with unnecessary requests or demands. 			
D-16	Facilitate family attendance at agency sponsored events (memorials, etc.)			
D-17	Consider facilitating interfamily/survivor/coworker networks.			
D-18	Secure access to Employee Assistance Program for family members; provide web address, if necessary.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT				
E-7	Activate CISM resources (peer support and mental health professional) to respond to incident.			
E-8	In case of serious injury or death to a Native American, immediately contact the home tribal leadership for cultural considerations.			
E-9	Role and function of peer support during incident: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide one-on-one peer support for incident survivors, coworkers, and others • Act as peer advocate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure proper rest/food - facilitate information flow • Conduct defusing for victims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allow “venting” of initial feelings and emotions - use emphasis on stress education • Serve as, or assist, family liaison 			
E-10	Coordinate formal CISD logistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location away from incident and media • Transportation • Refreshments • Lodging 			
E-11	Ensure that CISM resources can handle the magnitude of debriefing requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defusing: usually within the first 24 hours; limit to 20 people per session • Debriefings: usually 48-72 hours after the incident; limit to 20 people per session • Ensure confidentiality 			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT, cont'd				
E-12	Provide CISD within 48-72 hours for employees involved in the incident. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relieve from external responsibilities • Primary recipients should be those directly involved in incident; i.e., survivors, rescue workers, incident management team members, dispatchers, etc. • Keep crews together if possible • Hold <u>separate</u> sessions for people involved in immediate incident operation (survivors and rescuers) and outside peers/coworkers. • Provide cultural peer support as necessary. 			
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS				
F-8	Immediately activate communication procedures and assemble trained, experienced information team, using established procedures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place orders for experienced communication people; this is vital • Local-unit public affairs officer may serve as team leader, depending on experience with crisis communications • Set up communication center facilities • Publicize telephone number and location • Consider establishing an "800" phone number to facilitate information flow • Develop communication strategy 			
F-9	Victim/family considerations take precedence.			
F-10	Respond quickly and compassionately.			
F-11	Maintain your personal availability; stay involved.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, cont'd				
F-12	Confirm roles and responsibilities, and ensure that appropriate coordination occurs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit Public Affairs Officer • Information Officer • Primary incident Information Officer if critical incident is part of another incident • Cooperator Information Officer(s) 			
F-13	Establish approval process for release of information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate primary spokesperson for external release of information 			
F-14	Brief receptionists, dispatchers, and others on routing/handling of incoming calls and visitors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Public Affairs Officer assistance at dispatch centers and reception areas, if appropriate 			
F-15	Document all events, contacts, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronology • Contact Log • Photos 			
F-16	Maintain status board of confirmed releasable information; conduct transition briefings for incoming staff.			
F-17	Have maps and graphics available			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, cont'd				
F-18	Designate lead for <u>internal</u> and <u>interagency</u> communications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make initial internal contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate Agency and Department headquarters officials - Office of Aircraft Services, if aircraft is involved (DOT only) - Top-level Agency Administrator for geographic area - Public Affairs Officer for geographic area - Field Solicitor or Office of General Counsel - Servicing Personnel Officer • Establish process for distributing updated information at all levels of the organization • Maintain communication with others involved (survivors, etc.). 			
F-19	Be prepared to respond to media inquiries within minutes. Use the media to deliver important messages to the public. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an initial prepared statement • Show concern • Say what is being done and how quickly the agency responded • Tell what resources responded • Give any verified, releasable facts that are available • Report current status • Do not speculate or talk off the record; STATE ONLY FACTS • Confirm the obvious • Discuss initiation of investigation/ review, if appropriate • Stress that safety of rescue crews, investigation team, community, and others is paramount • Mention environmental impacts if appropriate • Thank cooperators • Inform the public what they can do to help 			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, cont'd				
F-20	Make immediate contact with local media and develop positive relationships with them.			
F-21	Schedule regular press briefings/updates.			
F-22	<u>When information has been approved for release, tell the media what you know when you know it</u> . Names of victims should be released as soon as next of kin have been notified.			
F-23	Explain agency response activities, including interagency roles and cooperation.			
F-24	Ensure technical experts (safety, aviation, fire behavior, etc.) are available and prepared for media interviews.			
F-25	Use media to get secondary messages to the public. Develop an initial prepared statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for volunteers, along with contact point, if appropriate • Safety messages • Need for cooperation, road closures, etc • Fire restrictions • Prescribed fire and wildland/urban interface issues 			
F-26	Provide and coordinate media access to incident site in cooperation with the Incident Management Team and investigation team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief media on incident site and air restrictions • Consider media pool arrangements 			
F-27	Anticipate media's needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical (phones, work areas, etc.) • Photos/biography(s) of victim(s) • Deadlines • Protective gear • Photo and video opportunities • Interviews 			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, cont'd				
F-28	Assess community needs			
F-29	Personally provide briefings at visible locations (include affected landowners,			
F-30	Take advantage of existing newsletters and other established communication tools.			
F-31	Keep the community and affected landowners/users informed and involved; establish a community liaison position.			
F-32	Family considerations always come first.			
F-33	Provide information officer support through family liaison, <u>for victims, families, and survivors; local/distant/hospitals.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if they want to talk to media • Advise designated family spokesperson about their rights, anticipated questions, etc. • Coordinate requests to minimize impact 			
F-34	Protect the rights of those who do not want media contact.			
F-35	Provide media whatever access is possible at funerals and memorial services and still maintain the dignity of the ceremony and the privacy of the family.			
F-36	Prepare condolence letters (within 24 hours if possible). Coordinate at all levels in the agency.			
F-37	Coordinate and work with IMT.			
F-38	Communicate with other ongoing incidents as appropriate.			
F-39	Use internal bulletin boards and other tools to communicate with employees, local and distant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post articles from local and regional newspapers (buy paper or copy from web sites. 			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, cont'd				
F-40	Establish TV/video-recording capability.			
F-41	Personally notify appropriate officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor • Mayor • County Commissioners • Members of Congress • Others 			
F-42	Ensure correct protocol is followed.			
F-43	Prepare briefing material, facts/stats, about area, talking point, or speeches if appropriate.			
F-44	Assign liaisons/escorts.			
F-45	Arrange for transportation.			
F-46	Schedule and facilitate press conference(s) if desired.			
F-47	Provide mechanism for keeping them involved/informed.			
F-48	Develop a separate communications plan for investigation.			
F-49	Develop a checklist for release of information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By whom (key spokesperson) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consider sensitivity, training, credibility, experience • What (key message) • When (concurrent releases?) • Where (concurrent releases?) • How (press conferences) • To whom (target audience) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agency - Public - Family 			
F-50	Brief incident, home-unit personnel, and families before report is released.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
ADMINISTRATION				
G-7	Develop additional Delegations of Authority, MOU's, MOA's, and other interagency agreements as required.			
G-8	Evaluate unit's added workload and request assistance as needed.			
G-9	Request help from people who have experience in this type of incident ("coaches").			
G-10	Work closely with top-level agency personnel and others to expedite all paperwork for the Department of Justice and OWCP.			
G-11	Work closely with agency law enforcement officials to facilitate gathering reports and other information from the sheriff and coroner.			
G-12	Designate a records person familiar with documentation needs and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regulations.			
G-13	Designate a single source for administrative record keeping and tracking throughout incident			
G-14	For incident-unit employee(s), designate a personnel representative to assist families with necessary paperwork and answer their questions. Make these people known to family liaison and other agency officials			
G-15	Appoint one individual to coordinate and be responsible for securing, gathering, and returning personal items, including vehicles and items from lockers or desks.			
G-16	Designate a personnel representative to coordinate with other agency personnel staffs.			
G-17	Provide a benefits package to families so they are aware of all entitlements			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
ADMINISTRATION, cont'd				
G-18	Identify a fiscal representative to give advice on administrative questions associated with paying travel costs of family members, costs of transporting bodies, funerals, memorial funds, counseling and/or CISM for family members and any other funding questions that may arise.			
INVESTIGATIONS				
H-8	Ensure the investigation team receives a thorough briefing about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review initial report • Jurisdictions involved • Current activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - search and rescue - investigations • Lists of personnel involved (injuries, fatalities, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - status - location - how to contact - agency • Key officials • Cooperators • Safety Officers • Criminal/civil implications 			
H-9	If a fatality is involved, an Accident Investigation Team will likely be appointed by a higher-level Agency Administrator; however, the local Agency Administrator must be prepared to host and cooperate with the investigation team.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	During, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, cont'd				
H-10	Clarify and agree upon roles, responsibilities, authorities, and objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate under IMT or stand alone • Determine Delegation of Authority • Determine how public information will be handled and designate a spokesperson (see Section F. • Provide logistical and administrative support 			
H-11	Assign an agency law enforcement officer and FOIA specialist as part of the investigation team.			
H- 12	Ensure safety alerts and other information updates are issued throughout the investigation process (internally and publicly as appropriate).			
H-13	Coordinate with local, State, and Federal jurisdictions during the investigative process, as appropriate			
11-14	Invite local, State and Federal jurisdictions to participate in strategy meetings and planning sessions.			
H- 15	Request a local, State, and Federal law enforcement liaison to work with investigation team.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	After	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES				
A-19	Ensure that key individuals (families, survivors and other appropriate individuals) are briefed on the investigation report prior to its release.			
A-20	Continue your personal and participative support of CISM.			
A-2 1	Ensure that administrative requirements are expedited, i.e., comp for claims, benefits, etc.			
A-22	Conduct a review of the management of the incident. Develop recommendations for improvement and incorporate into existing plans.			
FAMILY LIAISON				
D- 19	Continue working with family members concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims and benefits • Information requests, i.e., media interviews • Visiting site of incident • Funeral arrangements 			
D-20	Ensure that family liaison workers receive debriefing/stress counseling.			
D-2 1	When investigation reports are released, make subject-matter experts available to answer families' questions and concerns.			
D-22	Continue to communicate regularly with families, but establish a mutually agreed-upon conclusion to official involvement.			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	After, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT				
E- 13	Provide Information on follow-up resources, i.e., EAP.			
E- 14	Monitor stress reactions and cumulative stress in agency employees, especially during: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of investigative reports and incident management review reports. • Anniversary dates. • Memorial services. 			
E-15	Continue to provide CISD for all employees involved in the incident.			
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS				
F-52	Continue to share information.			
F-53	Provide closure and transition back to regular jobs.			
F-54	Prepare thank-you's and commendations.			
F-55	Complete documentation.			
F-56	Evaluate public information activities; adjust communication plan as appropriate.			
F-57	Close out with those involved.			
F-58	Thank those who helped (letters, newspaper notice, newsletter, etc.).			
F-59	Communicate local resource considerations (rehab, etc.).			
F-60	Address continuing impacts - visitors, traffic, media, production companies, etc. (Follow-up committee?)			
F-61	Facilitate return visits to the site if appropriate.			
F-62	Develop mechanism for follow-up to be sure all their needs have been met.			
F-63	Close out or send follow-up information.			
F-64	Send thank-you letters (if appropriate).			

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

#	After, cont...	Contacts/ Phone #'s	Assigned to	Status
ADMINISTRATION				
G-19	Identify a contact person and repository, i.e., FOIA, for information dissemination.			
G-20	Monitor the receipt of checks and other worker's compensation items through Personnel offices involved.			
G-21	Provide process for filing tort claims when asked.			
G-22	Remain in contact with fiscal and contracting experts assigned during the incident for any unanswered questions that come up.			
INVESTIGATIONS				
H-16	Ensure investigation team closes out with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Administrator • Local, State, and Federal authorities •IMT • Agency officials at appropriate levels 			
H-17	Brief incident and home-unit personnel and families prior to releasing the report.			
H-18	Follow up on recommendations.			
H-19	Ensure local, State, and Federal jurisdictions are involved in close-out and review.			
H-20	Obtain copies of local, State, and Federal agencies' reports.			
INTERNAL REVIEW				
I-1	The Agency Administrator will initiate an interagency review of how the incident was managed.			
I-2	The review will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address how well agency worked with local, State, and Federal cooperators. • Determine if the local emergency plan was effective. • Identify weak areas. • Assist in updating plan. 			

Agency Reporting Log

Incident: _____ **Location:** _____

Employee's Name: _____ **Incident Date:** _____

Description of accident situation: _____

<u>Required</u>	<u>Office/Official</u>	<u>Phone Numbers</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agency Director		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate Agency Administrators		
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Interagency Coordination Center	1-800-994-6312	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety Manager		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Servicing Personnel Officer		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Affairs Officer		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire Management Officer		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Law Enforcement Officer		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aviation Management		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Office of Inspector General (if waste, fraud, or abuse is indicated)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional/Field Solicitor of Office of the General Counsel		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tort Claims Officer		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Others:		

<u>Task</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Time/Date Completed</u>

CISD RESOURCE LIST

A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) is a positive and supportive, definitive discussion of the event and the impact it had on those exposed, involved, or responsible. The purpose of the meeting is to help employees process emotionally difficult events in order to prevent post traumatic stress disorder and to return them to a healthy work state as quickly as possible. CISD is NOT group counseling or group therapy. It is not a critique of the incident. A DEBRIEFING IS NOT AN EMERGENCY; ideally the session should take place 24-72 hours after the event.

Included here is a sampling of CISM resources available to agency administrators. This is by no means a comprehensive list. It is only intended to assist administrators in developing their own resource list. Local emergency service CISM teams and EAPs must also help. The key is to contact these resources as part of your pre-plan. Interview team coordinators or EAP professionals to ensure their experience in CISM and knowledge of the types of incidents they would encounter in your jurisdiction.

One final note: peer counselors, trained in the CISD process and with first-hand experience in related fields, i.e., firefighting and emergency operations, provide credibility and foster an atmosphere of trust. They validate the process. Therefore, CISM teams, which are peer-support driven, have had a much greater success in providing quality debriefing formats.

CISM TEAMS

NATIONALLY AVAILABLE

Two national teams (East & West) are available through NICC (208-387-5400). These teams are made up of peer counselors (10 + team leader) who have extensive experience in CISM intervention. Team leaders can determine number of peer counselors needed as well as other specific needs. A clinical director is also available to accompany the team.

LOCALLY/REGIONALLY AVAILABLE

Pacific Northwest Interagency Debriefing Team

Region 6 has a CISM team comprised of Forest Service employees trained as peer counselors (10 + 4 team leaders). Clinical director members have extensive experience in fire operations.

- Available through Northwest Coordination Center (NWCC)

Idaho Wildland CISM Program

Two state teams with people experienced in wildland fire, which include peer counselors and mental health professionals. These teams are trained in intervention services for families of survivors and firefighters.

- Trish Raynor Program Coordinator (208) 286-7772.
- In-State 24-hour Dispatch 1-800-632-8000 (Idaho State Dispatch)

VA Hospital Post Traumatic Stress Debriefing Team - Boise, Idaho

Mental health counselors:

- Mark Heilman - (208) 853-7013
- Maggie Morris - (208) 377-3675
- Dr. Patrick Costello - (208) 362-5622

California

Butte Glenn Emergency Service CISD Team - all emergency services.

- Program Coordinator: Dan Costello - answering machine (916) 345-5302
- 24-hour: (916) 538-6849 (California Dept. of Forestry Dispatch)

Colorado

Mayflower Team comprised of peer counselors and mental health professionals with extensive experience in emergency services.

- 24 hours, (303) 788-6889
- Colorado CISD Network, HealthOne EMS Office, Englewood, Colorado (303) 788-6317

Sierra-Nevada Critical Incident Stress Management Network

Volunteer peer counselors and mental health professionals. Reno Public Safety Dispatch Center, (702) 334-2161.

- For out-of-state team activation, call (702) 687-4240 or (702) 687-5300 (after hours).

Utah Critical Incident Stress Team

This team is comprised of peer counselors and a mental-health facilitator with expertise in emergency services but minimal wildland fire experience. Available throughout Utah.

- Dr. Richard Southwick, Clinical Director (801) 572-3796 (24 hours) work/ (801) 626-6406, home/ (801) 393-5074

Wyoming Critical Incident Stress Team (WYO ASSIST)

State of Wyoming (Albany County Sheriff Dispatch 1-800-821-3711)

- Clinical Director, Dr. Steve Goldman (307) 745-7150 - 24-hour critical incident

International Stress Debriefing Foundation

Can provide names and phone numbers for CISD resources nationwide, (410) 730-4311.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH FAMILIES

This section is a summary of key principles that are useful for communicating effectively with next of kin and other family members.

The first principles are for responding to emotion. Over the long run, strong emotional responses can be very helpful to acceptance and readjustment.

The two most important points in this section are LISTEN and DO NOT ARGUE. “Listening” is different from “hearing”—people hear with their ears, but listen with their minds. Real listening cannot be faked. No matter what the family says, do not argue. It will not help and usually makes the situation worse.

Negative information and high-stress situations tend to make people defensive. Almost any information can be said either negatively or positively.

Telling people what to do and starting sentences with the word “you” are common triggers for defensiveness. Defensiveness can also be reduced by avoiding general statements and dealing instead with specific needs.

The key factor to giving complicated information is breaking it into small pieces. Do not assume that the information has registered or has been understood. The guideline in this section can save a lot of misunderstanding and future problems.

A long-term family representative assignment can introduce a number of changes and the potential for communication problems. Goal-setting is a valuable tool for avoiding problems and keeping communication open. A long-term family representative assignment can also lead to over-dependency and a dread of letting go of a relationship. Goal-setting helps to keep the process focused on the end point of the assignment. A final meeting to officially end the assignment is usually helpful for both the family representative and the next of kin.

FIRST IN-PERSON CONTACT

There is a full range of communication problems associated with notifying the family. As in any difficult communication situation, the words that are used and how they are stated are very important. This section provides some guidelines on how to approach the first visit.

Use your introduction to confirm the identity of the victim. Use the name of the victim as you introduce yourself and any others who are with you.

Inform the family in private. This can be a problem if the victim is located away from home. It can also present an occasional problem when the family is home but does not want you to come in.

Avoid euphemisms or vague language in order to increase the family’s acceptance of what has occurred. Some people are uncomfortable using the words “dead” and “death” and prefer euphemisms such as “passed away” or phrases with religious connotations. Try to remember to use what have become known as the “D” words.

Gauge your next actions on the family’s responses. At some point, you will need to provide the family with the details of the event. However, first you will have to deal with the family’s initial response to the news of the death.

Be prepared for a wide range of responses. No two people will react in exactly the same way, and there is no way to predict what a family member's initial reaction will be. A sample of potential reactions follows. There are as many variations as there are people.

- Physical reactions, including fainting, hyperventilating, nausea and vomiting, cardiac arrest, or self-inflicted injuries.
- Anger or even rage that includes screaming and attempting to strike the family representative or others.
- Abnormal denial reactions that make the family unable to process the news.
- Apparent disinterest.
- Uncontrolled grief and hysteria.

The family may not actually hear or remember any of the information that you give them. Experienced family representatives not only make sure that families hear the information, they also return many times to repeat the information and to check for understanding.

A support group may be important for the family, especially if young children are involved. The denial mechanism that dulls pain may also dull the ability to perform routine tasks or even basic survival skills such as meal preparation or tending to an infant's needs.

AUTHORS:

- Bill Fish, USDA Forest Service - Region 6, Ochoco National Forest
- James Stone, USDA Forest Service - Region 4