



# Critical Incident Management (Policy & Procedure)

**OFFICIAL**

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# Policy

## National Context

[Authorised Professional Practice](#) (APP) is produced by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. All officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. Essentially, our “policy” is to comply with APP as it develops to cover all areas of policing.

Where content exists within APP we should not be reproducing it locally but instead signposting the on-line version. Similarly, we should not retain or develop any local policy documents if the subject matter is covered by APP. We may have some relatively low volume procedural documents but only if they are deemed necessary to supplement the content of APP.

## Purpose

Merseyside Police is committed to providing a fully effective and professional response to all incidents. In doing so, we will protect and reassure the public along with our own personnel and ensure that the legitimate rights of all communities are safeguarded.

This document sets out how Merseyside Police will operate during any Critical Incident. It will help ensure that the roles of Critical Incident and Gold Groups meetings adhere to their original aims.

This document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case. There may be occasions when a member of staff is considered to have acted outside of policy but if they have done so with honesty, integrity and professionalism, to make the best decision for the community we serve, they will be trusted and supported. On occasions when this is the case, the rationale for it must be properly recorded.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph inserted 21/06/2016 to emphasise appropriate use of discretion. Version number remained unchanged.

This document has been specifically created to supplement the Critical Incident component of Authorised Professional Practice: Critical Incident Management. It will be subject to regular review.

## Definitions

**Critical Incident** - Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.

**Critical Incident Meeting** – Declaration of a Critical incident is the method of operating to co-ordinate the police response to critical incidents or any situation that threatens serious consequences to the force or the safety of Merseyside.

**Gold Group** - To provide ongoing strategic overview and support to tactical delivery as an incident develops.

## Aims

Ensure a consistent approach to the identification, declaration, management & evaluation of critical incidents by clearly outlining the process.

Provide unambiguous command and control that clearly outlines the role and accountability of those involved.

Prevent incidents becoming critical by taking appropriate intervention measures early.

Improve public confidence and satisfaction in the way we deal with such incidents.

Ensure our service is provided in a way that is non-discriminatory, proportionate, fair and accountable.

Provide an open and transparent media and communication strategy, keeping in mind the particular needs of the investigation.

## Objectives

The overriding objective is to ensure all personnel involved have a clear understanding of Critical Incidents.

## Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures. (Mandatory Statement)

This policy will enable the above members of Merseyside Police to fully understand and enact the following approach. Making sure ;

- A consistent approach to the identification, declaration, management & evaluation of critical incidents by clearly outlining the process.
- Provide unambiguous command and control that clearly outlines the role and accountability of those involved.
- Prevent incidents becoming critical by taking appropriate intervention measures early.  
Improve public confidence and satisfaction in the way we deal with such incidents.
- Ensure our service is provided in a way that is non-discriminatory, proportionate, fair and accountable.
- Provide an open and transparent media and communication strategy, keeping in mind the particular needs of the investigation.

*This policy will apply to those who have called a critical incident, believe they are dealing with a critical incident or who are investigating a critical incident of all ranks and departments*

## Outcome Evaluation

The outcome evaluation is to ensure all personnel involved have a clear understanding of Critical Incidents.

The outcomes from this strategy and related policies will be subject of regular review, audit, and Assurance Mapping processes.

The Response and Resolution command team will monitor compliance with this policy through the mapping process.

The Response and Resolution command team will ensure training records are up to date and critical incidents are recorded correctly, identified, managed and communicated correctly through an audit process.

# Procedure

## Version History

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Detailed rational behind amending/updating policy or procedure.</b>	<b>Policy Owner Details</b>	<b>Policy Author Details</b>
V.1.3	June 2018			
V.1.4	Feb 2022	Review / refresh previous version	Ch. Supt Mark Wiggins	Ch. Insp. Geoff Stewart

## 1. Training

- 1.1 Staff should receive training appropriate to their role to provide them with a clear understanding of the concepts of and terminology of Critical Incident management.
- 1.2 Staff have a personal responsibility to ensure they are adequately trained for their role. They need to be aware of how to access resources, support and supervision so that they can provide a professional and effective response.

## 2. Multi Agency / Community Response

- 2.1 There should be early consideration of notifying and utilising multi agency partners to provide a coordinated response to a critical incident. Merseyside Critical Incident Protocol should be followed.
- 2.2 Early interaction with community groups and independent advisory groups is to be considered to ensure a proactive response to victim support and community engagement.
- 2.3 A Community Impact Assessment should be commenced and completed to ensure the needs of the community are taken into consideration. The effects of the incident on the community should be monitored. The CIA should be reviewed during the incident and prior to its closure.

## 3. Phase 1 - Identification and understanding

### 3.1 Identification

- 3.1.1 Any incident or event can become a Critical Incident. This includes crimes, spontaneous or pre-planned operational incidents and those that are non-operational internal incidents, which may, for example, invoke business continuity procedures.

- 3.1.2 The impact the incident will have on individuals, irrespective of the police response, cannot be predicted.
- 3.1.3 Reference should be made to the Critical Thinking Matrix – Appendix A.

### 3.2 Calling a Critical Incident

- 3.2.1 When it is considered that an incident is, or has the likelihood to escalate into, a Critical Incident, it is essential that it is communicated immediately to an appropriately trained senior officer. This will be a duty Bronze, Force Incident Manager, other Response Inspector or Force Duty Officer (FDO).
- 3.2.2 Personnel should not be discouraged from reporting these incidents to ensure organisational learning opportunities are maximised.

### 3.3 Declaring a Critical Incident

- 3.3.1 To avoid unnecessary declarations an officer of Inspector (or police staff equivalent) or above, can declare an incident as critical. They must record their rationale for this decision on the Command and Control log.
- 3.3.2 The decision to declare an incident critical should be based on at least one objective reason why the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family or the community.
- 3.3.3 The Command & Control log relating to the incident must be correctly coded, and the Force Duty Officer informed, who should review the incident immediately.

## 4. Phase 2 - Command & Control

### 4.1 Command Structure:

Command Level	Role
Gold	Duty NPCC officer
Silver	Force Duty Officer
Bronze (s)	Bronze 1 / FIM/ Other Response Inspector / Sergeant as directed by Silver.

### 4.2 Transfer of Command

- 4.2.1 If a Critical Incident is declared, the above Command Structure will apply. Should the Incident occur within office hours and if it is deemed suitable, then a transfer of Command can occur to the Local Policing representative (Supt or Chief Inspector) who will take ownership and co-ordinate the initial meeting and actions. The Silver Commander's must formally 'hand-over' the Critical Incident and document this on the Storm log/Command and control log.

### 4.3 Management & Monitoring

- 4.3.1 Critical Incidents will be managed and monitored within the agreed Command Structure. Availability and movement of Force Resources to support the incident will be agreed through Gold or Silver taking into account the Threat Harm and Risk prevalent Force Wide at the given time.

### 4.4 Meetings

#### 4.4.1 (Non-office hours) Initial Co-ordination Meeting (ICoM)

The FDO will determine who are 'key' to critical functions (Golden Hour) in response to the incident. It is suggested that the below stakeholders meet and the FDO chairs an Initial Co-ordination Meeting (ICoM) response to the Critical Incident. The ICoM can be a physical meet or via telephone conferencing but should consult/include as a minimum:

- Force Duty Officer (Silver/Chair)
- Investigations Detective Inspector (Bronze Investigation)
- Duty FIO (Bronze Intel)
- Bronze 1 / Other Response Inspector
- LP Bronze or representative
- Matrix ( If firearms related or applicable).

#### 4.4.2 (Office Hours) Critical Incident / Gold Meeting

- 4.4.3 The Chair has responsibility for setting an attendance list dependant on the seriousness of the incident. Cognisance must be taken of [2.2](#) above when determining attendance.
- 4.4.4 The FDO may wish to call a wider meeting should the seriousness of the incident dictate or if directed by Gold.
- 4.4.5 All actions resulting from the ICoM will be recorded on the Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare template in the GARD folders and circulated to duty NPCC and relevant Department Command Team members.

### 4.5 Gold Group

- 4.5.1 The Gold Commander should consider the formulation of the Gold Group.
- 4.5.2 The Gold Commander is ultimately responsible for any strategic decision affecting the police, however a Gold Group can provide the Gold Commander with valuable consultation and decision support. It will help ensure the co-ordination in multi-agency type incidents, and provide links with local community and other legitimately interested parties as appropriate.
- 4.5.3 The principal function of the Gold Group should be strategic, i.e. to set strategy, deliver resources and ensure standards of service delivery. However the specific functions and membership of the Gold group will vary with each incident. All Gold Group meetings MUST be documented and are subject to disclosure, unless public interest immunity applies. The attached agenda templates should be used and meetings minuted in the usual manner.



#### 4.5.4 Potential Gold Group membership could include:

- Chief officers
- Senior officers/staff involved in handling the incident
- Staff Associations
- Emergency services (NWS/MFRS/Coast Guard)
- Key community members
- Local Authority officers (Emergency planners/Highways/Housing etc)
- Military
- Mersey Travel
- Force Legal Department
- CPS
- Press Office
- Finance
- PSD
- Force Operations
- OHU

(Not exhaustive list)

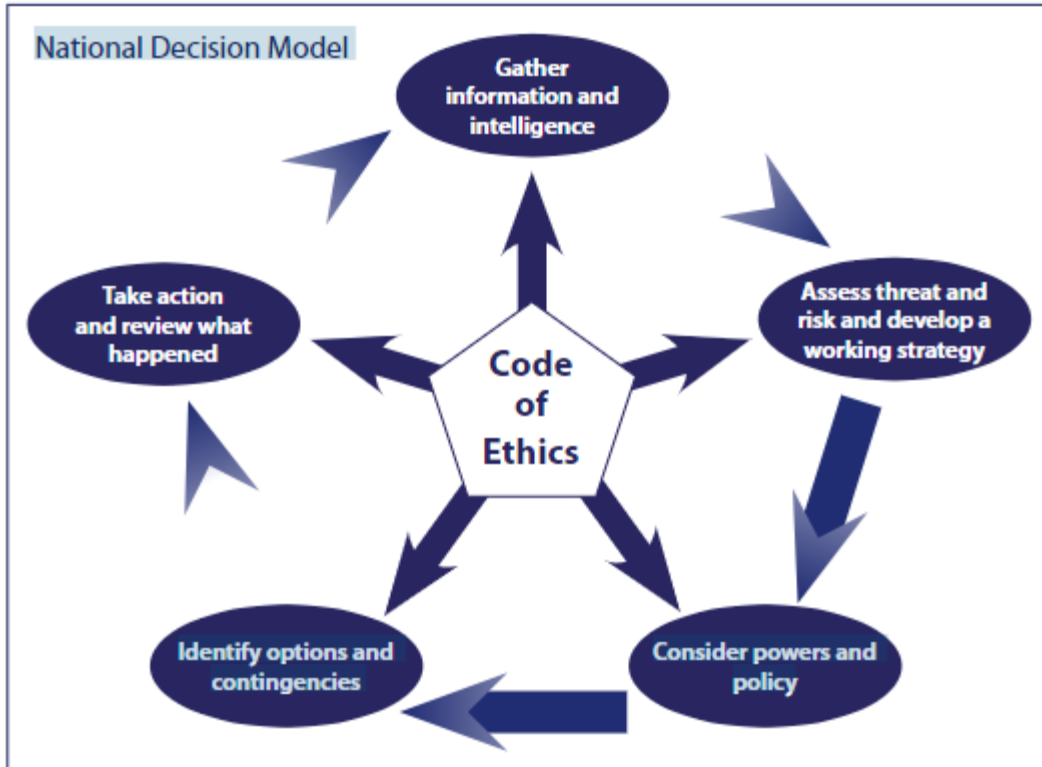
#### 4.6 Agenda

4.6.1 The agenda templates within Appendix B are to be used for all Critical Incident meetings.

4.6.2 To capture an accurate record of all critical incident activities by stakeholders a folder is created by the Force Duty Officer within the OSU Team Drive (OSU\GARD\Critical Incidents). A process map is also available to assist.

#### 4.7 National Decision Model (NDM)

4.7.1 The use of the NDM will ensure the effectiveness of the police response is proportionate to the communities affected or potentially affected by the critical incident.



## 5. Phase 3 – Closure and Exit Strategies

- 5.1 It may be possible to conclude or scale down a Critical Incident when it has been assessed that the risk of significant loss of confidence has been averted, or management plans are in place to prevent further loss and restore confidence.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Critical Incident lead commander to rationalise their decision to conclude or scale down a Critical Incident. This may be conducted at either Gold or Silver level.
- 5.3 This will be recorded on the relevant Command & Control log and within the meeting minutes.

## 6. De-brief / Review & Organisational learning

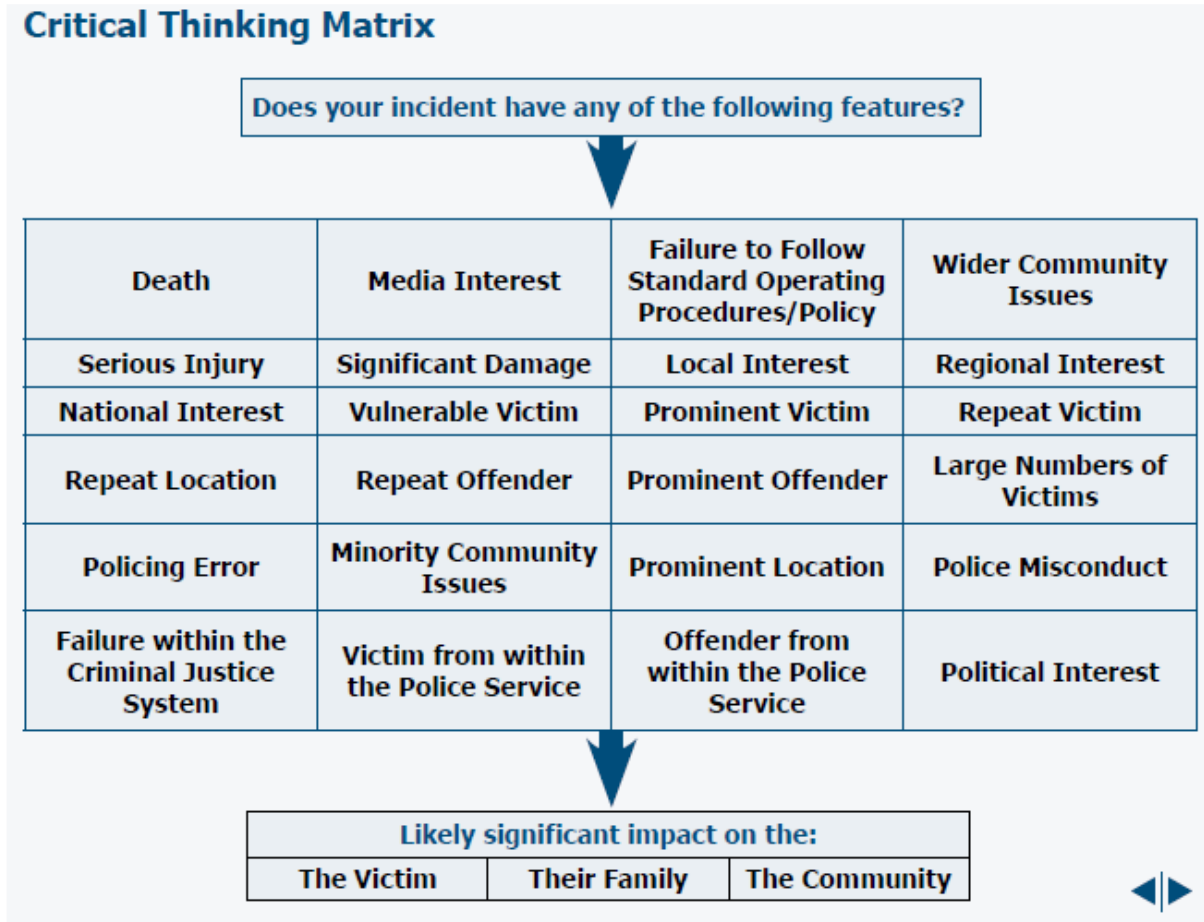
### 6.1 De-brief

- 6.1.1 The Silver Commander (FDO) is responsible for ensuring that all officers and staff deployed to a Critical incident are debriefed.
- 6.1.2 The Silver Commander (FDO) must consider an operational debrief post incident, to capture any organisational learning. Consideration should always be given to extending any debrief to include external stakeholders.

**6.2 Review & Organisational Learning**

- 6.2.1 A process to review Critical Incidents exists and learning or good practice is to be communicated to relevant parties.
- 6.2.2 Any organisational learning points will be shared through the Critical Incident Governance Group. This is a quarterly meeting chaired by the ACC with the Protective Services portfolio. It reviews the Forces capabilities in dealing with Critical Incidents.
- 6.2.3 Chief Officers may direct a full review of a Critical Incident at any time.

**Appendix A**



**Appendix B**



App B - Updated Recording forms .doc

**Appendix C**



App C - Guidance .docx