



St John the Baptist Anglican Church Canberra

Policy on	Critical Incidents
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Responsible agency	Risk Advisory Committee
Electronic file name	Critical Incidents Policy.pdf
Repository	https://www.stjohnscanberra.org/documents-and-reports
First introduced	December 2017
Parish Council review	August 2018
Next revision due	May 2021

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

This policy is bound by The Master Policy of the Parish (www.stjohnscanberra.org) Parish Council Login) which recognises the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion and the Governance of the Diocese Ordinance as the foundations on which our actions are based.

Relevant legislation:

The (Diocesan) Safe Communities of Faith Policy August 2015, which provides for

- The clergy and Parish Council to be responsible for ensuring that: as far as is reasonably practicable, that all church workers and those accessing ministries conducted by the ministry unit comply with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.
- All reasonable and practicable steps are taken to avoid risks of physical and psychological harm to members of the church and wider community arising from their involvement in any ministry.
- *Taking action, as far as is reasonably practical, to address and reduce actual and reasonably likely risk of physical or psychological harm to members of the ministry unit or other persons accessing any ministry provided by the ministry unit*

Australian Government's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism (2017).

The Strategy refers to those who manage places such as churches as having primary responsibility to protecting people that work, use, or visit their sites from a range of foreseeable threats.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011

PRINCIPLES

St John's Canberra is firmly committed to a healthy and safe workplace. Parish Council aims to remove or reduce the risks to health, safety and wellbeing of all workers (clergy, employees, volunteers, and contractors), visitors, and anybody else who may be affected by our ministry and business operations. It also aims to ensure all work activities are undertaken in a safe manner.

Critical incidents include medical/mental health emergencies, aggressive or criminal behaviour and psychological matters that require urgent intervention to prevent harm to people or damage to property.

The Parish Council delegates through this policy the authority to risk stewards supported by control owners to plan for and respond to critical incidents. As far as is reasonably practicable this will reduce the likely risk of physical or psychological harm to members of the ministry unit and to any person accessing the St John's ministry unit in any of its forms.

Risk stewards will advise the Parish Council of the changing nature of the hierarchy of risks across strategic, business and operational risks for their review. Through liaison with the control owners, risks will be assessed annually and staff and volunteers encouraged to

put their personal safety first while adopting a pro-active response in any confrontational situation.

PROCEDURES

Preventative

Parish Council will seek advice, as is helpful, from its Risk Advisory Committee as it also makes use of the skill-set of both the Parish risk stewards and control owners, to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, a measured response to any critical incident.

As needed, and at least annually, Parish Council will arrange for the distribution of a brochure *Welcoming Church, Safe Church, Parish Guidelines for Critical Incidents*, as part of the review process of this Critical Incidents' set of papers.

Across the parish operations all volunteers and staff will be made aware, and encouraged to share their views, of risks that are part of our life as a member of our community.

Parishioners are reminded to be alert of their personal security in parish buildings and grounds. In any emergency there are a number of options to call for assistance such as: 000 in an emergency; 131 444 Police; 0416 159 814 Paul Black; and, 0402 629 667 Jonathan Cole.

During Incidents

The responsibility for parish hospitality and security during worship rests with the clergy and other adult members in the congregation working together to negate the situation.

Any risk steward and control owner who is present during an incident will be responsible for caring for those not immediately involved. General guidelines are found at Attachment A.

Recovery

In any critical incident any media requests will be channeled through the Rector who will also coordinate later pastoral support to those who have been affected.

Churchwardens will prepare a report for the Bishop and liaise with insurance and other bodies to ensure all aspects of compliance are met.

Attachment A

Suggested approaches to certain situations

For the use of risk managers (Rector, Executive Officer of St John's Care and the Parish Treasurer) and control owners as background reference material.

Should a person be disruptive:

- Don't be confrontational; that will often escalate the situation
- Don't touch or attempt to manhandle the person
- Speak to the person calmly
- As appropriate invite them outside, with at least one other person, to a neutral space, where a conversation can take place, possibly over tea or coffee.
- If a person becomes violent evacuate the area and call the police. People should be asked to move to the Assembly Point at the western side of St John's Care to ensure all are accounted for.

Dealing with people in this category is a sensitive matter; they respond better to a calm and measured approach rather than one which is confrontational.

Should a person be intent on inflicting harm:

- A first response in this situation is, if possible, to evacuate an area. If the perpetrator is on site all areas should be locked down and the police called. Control owners are encouraged to install the free *Emergency+* app on their smart phones.
- Accounting for the safety and well-being of all those on site is important. If at any stage a decision is taken to evacuate an area, and it is seen to be safe to do so, ask people to move to and remain at the Assembly Point. If not safe to do so, people could be asked to congregate in areas such as Constitution Avenue, Anzac Parade or Amaroo Street. As and where possible, the names of those who are safe should be recorded.

Should there be the potential to result in psychological harm:

Whether affected, directly or indirectly, by a natural disaster or personal grief, people may need support to process what has taken place. Others who are affected may require pastoral support.