



## **B2(b) CRISIS PLAN**

**Brian Needham (Revised March 2007)**

### **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

#### **1. Introduction**

An Incident is defined as:

- a. an event leading to a fatality, serious injury, or circumstances in which an expedition member might be at serious physical or emotional risk;
- b. serious life-threatening illness, or an illness threatening serious physical or mental consequences;
- c. any relevant situation where negative press coverage or a legal case may result.

Incident Management is defined as:

- the processes and systems put into place to minimise the impact of an incident.

These processes and systems are to be documented as the **Incident Management Plan (IMP)**.

#### **2. Preparation:**

- a. Establish an **"Immediate Response Team" (IRT)** to implement the agreed IMP; such a team is to be large enough to sustain seven days a week twenty-four hours a day (7-24) manning for a period of at least a week, and possibly more, from the start of an incident.
- b. Devise an availability calendar, ensuring that at least two / three / four (depending on size of expedition being undertaken) suitable persons are available on call on a 7-24 basis while expedition is in the field.
- c. Provide a base, giving access on a 7-24 basis during the time of the incident, with full communication systems (e.g. telephones, fax, email, computers, printers, etc.).
- d. Develop a network in the industry for support and advice e.g. travel agent, police, medic, media advisor, legal advisor, YET / RGS-IBG.
- e. Review the IMP, and update as necessary.
- f. Conduct simulation exercises pre-departure of the expedition potentially tied into training weekends).
- g. Develop a contact database of emails and telephone numbers of all stakeholders and media contacts.
- h. Develop links with the "Home Agent" team to ensure initiation of the IRT is clearly defined.



### 3. Role of the Immediate Response Team (IRT)

- a. Liaison with senior members of the organisation (e.g. Expedition Society Chairman, Headmaster/mistress) as agreed beforehand.
- b. Provide information to the stakeholders as agreed prior to the expedition.
- c. To be the official line of communication between an expedition and the home base in the event of an incident (see Home Agent for normal communications); Expedition Leaders to develop expedition policy strongly discouraging any other direct contacts with home (including the use of mobiles, e-mail, satellite phones, etc.); all other members of the initiating body (e.g. school, expedition society) to be aware that all communication with Expeditions and/or the media is to be solely through the IRT or jointly with the School / LEA in the event of any major incident arising.
- d. The IRT will support the Expedition Leaders field decisions and offer advise and support.
- e. The IRT will handle the UK end of an incident, including
  - i. Communication with expedition.
  - ii. Liaison with parents and next of kin [NOK] of all expedition members and leaders.
  - iii. Liaison with Chairman, etc. (as (b) above).
  - iv. Liaison with Treasurer for any financial aspects outside IMP provisions.
  - v. Repatriation arrangements (including reception of returnees, with any necessary counselling).
  - vi. Informing stakeholders as to the decision of continuance or otherwise of the Expedition.
  - vii. Communications with Foreign Office / Embassy / High Commission, travel agent, police, legal advisors, insurers and Health & Safety Executive.
  - viii. Communications with media.
  - ix.. Maintaining a scrupulous incident log, including expedition actions.
  - x.. Post-incident actions (including ongoing contact with affected parents / NOK).
  - x.i. Preparing a Post-Incident Report [PIR], and arranging for an inquiry.
  - xii. Management of resources for all of the above tasks.

### 4. Briefing the Expedition Leaders

Briefing to Leaders must include

- a. Communication with IRT (including the need to establish two-way contact at the time of the incident) and the need to control the flow of information.
- b. The importance of timely and accurate information concerning any incident with frequent updates – what, when and to whom to report.
- c. The importance of establishing positive relations with UK Embassy / High Commission.
- d. Full introduction to all key documents and templates (viz. IMP, Near Miss Report, Incident Report, Casevac Report)

*All the articles which form the Webguide are all written by able and experienced leaders of youth expeditions, but represent their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Council of The Young Explorers' Trust. The points made represent suggestions for consideration rather than direct advice, and the responsibility for how these suggestions are used rests entirely with the users. No liability is accepted by the authors or by the Young Explorers' Trust for any loss or damage arising from the contents of these papers.*



- e. Maintenance of scrupulous incident log(s) in the field
- f. Maintenance of Communication Log Book.
- g. Handling an emergency in the field.
- h. Role of the Home Agent and links with IRT.

## 5. Emergency Information

- a. The IRT will have copies of the pre- prepared expedition information; one will be held in the designated “home agent”, and the others will be provided to all members of IRT; a copy of some of this information will have been lodged in advance with the relevant UK Embassy / High Commission in the host countries.
- b. The Expedition Leader will each hold a copy of this information.
- c. There should be additional copies with the expedition to cover any group separate from the main group for any period intended to be over 72 hours.
- d. All copies will contain the information listed below; those with the expedition will also include a detailed itinerary including overnight locations and contact details.
- e. Personal details of all participating in expedition:
  - i Name
  - ii Individual Identification Number (IDN)
  - iii Gender
  - iv Age
  - v Date of birth
  - vi Next of Kin contact details throughout the duration of the expedition
  - vii Medical information
  - viii Religion (if applicable)
- f. Key contacts:
  - i Embassy / High Commission
  - ii Relevant UK Government Departments
  - iii Host country government (central and / or local) contacts
  - iv Local emergency services and hospitals
  - v Local transport providers
  - vi Insurers
  - vii Travel agent (for any necessary evacuation)
  - viii Expedition’s local media contacts (if already in contact)  
(for use only by IRT, Expedition Leader or nominated representative)
  - ix UK media contacts (for use only by IRT)



## 6. Contact with NOK through the IRT

(It is important to establish whether or not any prior contact has been made with the NOK, either by the expedition itself or by Foreign Office / local police acting under British Consulate Services instruction).

This contact with the NOK must be done by a senior figure (e.g. Chairman, Headmaster, etc.), ideally in person. In the case of an international fatality the Local Police may be involved. This is a stressful interaction and it is recommended that two people from the IRT or Home Agent should attend.

- a. Express deep sorrow of self and other members.
- b. Provide detail of 100% confirmed facts at that time, while avoiding making any judgement, supposition or attributing blame.
- c. Inform them that they will be kept up to date as new facts and details emerge.
- d. Provide IRT contact details; (it is advised that NOK should have one point of contact only).
- e. Assess need to visit NOK and / or for NOK to visit incident area.

The IRT must be prepared to be contacted by the NOK of all the other members of the Expedition, and be in a position to assure such callers that their own sons/daughters (or in the case of leaders, spouses / partners) are safe and being properly cared for, giving assurances that NOK will be updated with any developments; it would be useful to have a written brief to ensure that all relevant information and facts are communicated.

If the incident becomes public knowledge, then the IRT must attempt to contact all expedition NOK with assurances as above, and not necessarily await contact from NOK.

The IRT will need to be in a position to provide the same information for any “sponsors” of expedition members (e.g. schools, Local Education Authorities, and other bodies which have “supplied” members of the expedition).

The IRT will need to be prepared to provide a full briefing to the relevant authority in the school / academic organisation of those expedition members directly involved in the major incident, and to seek support in the counselling of NOK.



## 7. Contact with the media

- a. Release regular accurate information to agreed media list.
- b. Release a clear protocol for media contact with the Society.
- c. Use the initial prepared statement (below).
- d. Only release written statements.
- e. Be prepared to provide a trained spokesperson for media contact.
- f. If asked for information about the expedition society / school / etc. provide copies of the prepared statement of expedition ethos and activities.
- g. Ensure that the website (if there is one) is updated daily, or even hourly if necessary.

### The following statement to be given by the IRT (example from BSES Expeditions)

As Executive Director of BSES Expeditions I make this statement:

- Everyone involved with the BSES Expeditions would like to express deep sorrow that an incident has occurred which has resulted in the (death / injury) of one of the expedition, as yet unidentified / name.
- (He / She / Name) was a (member / leader) of our expedition to (location), which commenced on (date).
- The other (number) leaders and (number) members of this expedition are believed to be fit and well.
- It would be inappropriate for us to speculate on any aspects involving the incident until confirmation of the circumstances which led to the incident have been received and confirmed.
- When we have this information, a further statement will be made.
- BSES Expeditions has been organising youth expeditions since 1932 and has a fine safety record.
- Over 7500 leaders and members have been involved in over 100 six-week expeditions to the wild and trackless areas of over 20 different countries on all six continents.
- The Society is arranging for an external inquiry to be established to examine the causes of this incident.
- The report of this enquiry will be made public.
- The next media update will be held at (location) at (time) on (date).