

Commission Chief Executive Directive No. 09/12: Critical incident response and recovery

1 Purpose:

When a critical incident affects one or more Queensland communities, an immediate response by the Department of Community Safety is critical to save lives and property. In the longer term, affected community members are given essential support by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to cope and recover. Prevention of loss and community recovery from loss is a clear priority of government that takes precedence over the delivery of less essential government programs. Section 98(1) (d) of the *Public Service Act 2008* requires chief executives to adopt management practices that are responsive to government priorities. Likewise, individual employees are required by the *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service* to accept and value their duty to be responsive to both the requirements of government and to the public interest. The directive outlines the responsibilities of the Departments of Community Safety and Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services as lead agencies, departments and individual employees to prepare for and contribute to the critical incident response and recovery ('response and recovery') effort.

2 Commencement date:

10 August 2012

3 Legislative provisions:

Public Service Act 2008 – sections 25,46,53,98

4 Application:

- 4.1 This directive applies to departments defined under section 14 of the *Public Service Act 2008* and to public service employees employed in departments who undertake response and recovery work under the direction of the Departments of Community Safety and Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services respectively, and who are remunerated according to the directive relating to critical incident entitlements and conditions. This directive continues to apply to recovery work undertaken under the direction of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services after the application of the directive related to critical incident entitlements and conditions expires.
- 4.2 This directive does not apply to public service offices defined under section 21 of the *Public Service Act 2008* or to the employees of those public service offices.
- 4.3 This directive does not apply to public service employees undertaking unpaid volunteer work under the direction of Volunteering Queensland or a non-government organisation.

5 Related information:

- 5.1 This directive should be read in conjunction with the current directive relating to critical incident entitlements and conditions issued by the Minister responsible for industrial relations.

6 Directive:

6.1 Principles

- (a) Critical incident reserve pools ('reserve pools') support the government's commitment to response and recovery by redirecting the collective energies of the Queensland public service workforce from less critical priorities to the critical priorities of the protection of life and property and longer-term human and social recovery.
- (b) Each chief executive will determine their department's critical service priorities as a basis for negotiating the department's contribution to the reserve pools.
- (c) The coordination and management of a critical incident response reserve pool is the responsibility of the Department of Community Safety.
- (d) The coordination and management of a critical incident recovery reserve pool is the responsibility of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.
- (e) Chief executives will prioritise critical incident response and recovery and work together to ensure that the reserve pools are adequately resourced.
- (f) Reserve pool members are pre-approved to attend training and to be deployed to response or recovery tasks.
- (g) Employees who volunteer to participate in a reserve pool will, except in extenuating circumstances, make themselves available to undertake training and induction and to be deployed as determined by the relevant lead agency.

6.2 Role of the lead agencies

- (a) The Department of Community Safety and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services are the lead agencies for response and recovery respectively.
- (b) In preparation for a critical incident the chief executive of each relevant lead agency will
 - i. Determine the desirable size and appropriate location(s), attributes and skill requirements of the reserve pool, taking into account the probability that any critical incident may also directly affect reserve pool members.
 - ii. Negotiate with each chief executive the numbers of reserve pool members which can feasibly be made available.
 - iii. Actively market reserve pool membership to potential reserve pool members.
 - iv. Provide induction and training to ensure that the reserve pool is prepared at short notice to undertake community response or recovery activities.
- (c) In the event or aftermath of a critical incident the chief executive of each relevant lead agency will
 - i. Determine the location and type of tasks to be performed.
 - ii. Negotiate additional emergency resourcing in the event that resourcing requirements for response or recovery exceed the capacity of the reserve pool.

6.3 Processes for resourcing response and recovery

- (a) Where there is disagreement on the level of a department's contribution to the reserve pools, or a department is unable to meet its quota in practice, the department's contribution will be negotiated by the Commission Chief Executive.
- (b) Once a department's contribution is negotiated, the department's chief executive is responsible for ensuring readiness to meet their contribution of trained reserve pool members.

- (c) Chief executives will give priority to additional requests for assistance from the chief executive of the relevant lead agency in the event that a critical incident requires a response greater than can be delivered by a reserve pool.

6.4 Establishing the reserve pool

- (a) Chief executives will identify the operational and geographic areas that will be permitted to participate in contributing staff for the reserve pools.
- (b) Chief executives will encourage reserve pool membership and provide information about departmental support mechanisms such as pre-approval to attend training, induction and deployment in the event of a critical incident.
- (c) Employees of the identified areas will be given the opportunity to nominate as reserve pool members and may be encouraged to nominate. Nomination is voluntary.
- (d) Employees will nominate for reserve pool membership only if committed and available to undertake necessary training activities and to being deployed in the event of a critical incident.
- (e) Employees who have completed reserve pool training and are listed as reserve pool members will make themselves available for deployment as directed by the relevant lead agency unless their circumstances at the time of a critical incident make serving in a reserve pool temporarily impractical.
- (f) Chief executives have sole discretion to determine which nominating employees will participate in the department's contribution to a reserve pool.
- (g) The chief executives of the relevant lead agencies have sole discretion to determine the deployment of reserve pool members to tasks and locations.
- (h) Supervisors will release reserve pool members to undertake response and recovery preparation and deployment as required by the relevant lead agency.
- (i) Each department will implement protocols for
 - i. employees to formally notify that they no longer wish to serve on a reserve pool
 - ii. notifying the relevant lead agency of employees who are no longer available for any reason
 - iii. replacing employees who are no longer available in order to maintain the department's quota
 - iv. establishing a nominated contact officer who will maintain an accurate contact list and through whom all issues relating to the reserve pool will be resolved.
- (j) Public service employees will work under the direction of the relevant lead agency once a critical incident has been declared. An employee who is unable to meet a direction given to them as a reserve pool member is to discuss their circumstances with the nominated contact officer within the relevant lead agency.

7 Record keeping:

- 7.1 Chief executives must ensure records relating to decisions made under this directive are managed in accordance with Queensland State Archives *General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records*.

8 Evaluation and reporting:

- 8.1 The Commission Chief Executive will determine how the effectiveness of the arrangements under this directive are to be evaluated.
- 8.2 The chief executives of the Department of Community Safety and Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services must report on evaluation criteria as determined by the Commission Chief Executive.

9 Dictionary:

Critical incident is defined by the provisions of the *Critical Incident Entitlements and Conditions Directive*

Deployment is the allocation of reserve pool members to response or recovery tasks by the relevant lead agency

Recovery is a program of work led by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to assist in the physical, financial, social and emotional recovery of individuals and communities from the effects of a critical incident. Recovery activities may commence at the same time as the emergency response activities and can continue for some months beyond the initial response, depending on the needs of the affected community.

Reserve pool is an inter-departmental pool of public service employees who are skilled and prepared to undertake either response or recovery activities.

Response is a program of work led by the Department of Community Safety to prevent the loss of life and property in the event of a critical incident.

10 Authority:

This directive is made pursuant to section 53, *Public Service Act 2008*.

Commission Chief Executive

Gazetted: 10 August 2012