Emergency Response Team (ERT) Protocol

Standardized Incident Assessment & Response Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) is to provide a rapid, coordinated, and organized leadership response to unexpected incidents that may impact employees, operations, customers, brand reputation, or company continuity.
The ERT is responsible for:

- Immediate assessment of incidents
- Coordinating cross-functional communication
- Managing operational continuity
- Mitigating legal, reputational, and employee risks
- Ensuring timely leadership decision-making

1. Incident Activation Criteria

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) shall be activated immediately upon awareness of any incident that may significantly impact employee safety, customer safety, operations, legal or regulatory compliance, business continuity, or company reputation.
Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Employee injury, hospitalization, or fatality
- Workplace violence, threats of violence, criminal activity, robbery, carjacking, weapons-related incidents, assaults, or active threat situations
- Mental health crises, including suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, welfare check situations, or acute emotional distress requiring intervention
- Customer or public safety incidents
- Operational disruptions, facility emergencies, or natural disasters
- Cybersecurity incidents, data breaches, or significant IT outages
- Regulatory, legal, or compliance matters
- Media inquiries, social media escalations, or reputational events
- Any incident deemed high-risk by leadership

Any incident involving threats, weapons, assault, robbery, carjacking, workplace violence, or active threats shall require:

- ERT activation
- Compliance with the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy
- Completion of a Site Security Assessment as part of the post-incident review process

Upon activation, the ERT will coordinate response efforts utilizing the Critical Incident Response Program Toolkit and associated resources, including applicable checklists, templates, quick reference guides, communication tools, return-to-work resources, and incident-specific playbooks.

For incidents involving a mental health crisis, the assigned HR Business Partner (HRBP) will serve as the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and coordinate response activities in accordance with the Mental Health Crisis Playbook.

2. Incident Response Framework

Upon activation of the ERT, incident response activities will follow the phased framework below. The Incident Commander is responsible for coordinating activities, assigning responsibilities, and ensuring required documentation is completed.

Phase 1 – Immediate Emergency Response (0–30 Minutes)
Objectives

- Protect life and safety
- Contact emergency services
- Secure the scene
- Account for employees
- Preserve evidence
- Notify required leadership

Immediate Actions
- Confirm known facts
- Assess severity and business impact
- Notify ERT members
- Establish Incident Commander
- Open incident documentation log
- Schedule initial ERT meeting

Phase 2 – Department Coordination (30 Minutes–4 Hours)
Objectives
- Establish coordinated response
- Preserve evidence and documentation
- Support impacted employees
- Assess operational, legal, and regulatory risk
- Develop communication strategy

Key Activities
- Assign departmental action items
- Initiate OSHA and insurance review if applicable
- Preserve footage and electronic records
- Coordinate employee support resources
- Draft internal and external communications

Phase 3 – Stabilization & Recovery (24–72 Hours)
Objectives
- Restore operations safely
- Complete required reporting
- Conduct security and risk reviews
- Support employee recovery
- Implement corrective actions

Key Activities
- Reopening decisions
- Site security assessment
- Return-to-work planning
- Leadership debrief
- Post-incident review

3. Emergency Response Team Structure

Department	Primary Responsibilities
Operations	Incident coordination, site management, continuity planning, vendor/facility coordination
Human Resources	Employee communication, family support, personnel matters, documentation, counseling resources, liability assessment/ legal communication.
IT / Cybersecurity	System protection, communications infrastructure, cybersecurity assessment, data recovery

Marketing / Communications	Media statements, social media monitoring, internal messaging, brand protection
Safety/ Risk Management	compliance guidance, regulatory communication, OSHA, workers' comp, investigations, regulatory compliance.
Executive Leadership	Strategic decisions, approvals, escalation management
ERT Incident Commander	Coordinates overall response, assigns workstreams, approves communications, schedules update meetings, ensures documentation completion

4. Initial Emergency Response Meeting Agenda

Objective: Quickly assess the situation, align facts, assign responsibilities, and establish communication protocols.

Discussion Topics

1. What happened?
2. What facts are confirmed?
3. What is the immediate risk to:
    - Employees
    - Customers
    - Operations
    - Reputation
4. What actions have already been taken?
5. Are emergency services or authorities involved?
6. What communication is required internally and externally?
7. What departments require immediate action?
8. What is the next update timeline?

5. Departmental Responsibilities

Operations

- Secure affected location(s)
- Coordinate site leadership
- Maintain business continuity
- Document operational impacts
- Provide ongoing situation updates

Human Resources

- Coordinate EAP outreach
- Assess need for group debrief sessions
- Coordinate employee support resources
- Support impacted employees and families
- Coordinate employee communications
- Manage leave, benefits, or counseling resources
- Document personnel-related actions
- Maintain confidentiality standards

IT / Cybersecurity

- Assess systems and communication platforms
- Contain cyber or technical threats
- Protect company data and infrastructure
- Maintain emergency communication access
- Provide system status updates

Marketing / Communications

- Prepare approved internal messaging
- Manage media inquiries
- Monitor social media activity
- Coordinate public statements
- Protect company reputation and messaging consistency

Legal / Risk Management

- Review legal exposure
- Guide documentation requirements
- Coordinate with insurance providers if applicable
- Advise on regulatory reporting obligations

6. Communication Standards

- All media inquiries must be routed through media@whitewatercw.com
- and leaders should utilize the Media Statement Script.
- Avoid speculating or spreading of unverified information
- Maintain a centralized incident log
- Provide scheduled status updates to leadership

7. Documentation Requirements

Incident Coordinator responsible for:

- Incident Timeline Template
- Critical Incident Response Checklist
- Witness statements
- Communication logs
- OSHA documentation
- Law enforcement information
- Final incident summary

Reference:

- Incident Timeline Template
- Critical Incident Response Checklist

8. Post-Incident Review

Within 72 hours following incident stabilization:

- Conduct leadership debrief
- Review response effectiveness
- Identify operational gaps
- Document corrective actions
- Update ERT procedures if necessary

When applicable:

- HRBP leads RTW assessment
- Medical clearance required
- Restrictions reviewed
- Accommodation review completed
- RTW Checklist completed

9. Guiding Principles

The ERT will operate under the following principles:

- Rapid response
- Clear communication
- Employee safety first

- Fact-based decision making
- Cross-functional accountability
- Business continuity focus
- Reputation protection
- Respect and professionalism

10. Standard Meeting Trigger

If any incident has potential to:

- Impact employee safety
- Interrupt operations
- Create media attention
- Damage company reputation
- Escalate legally or financially

An ERT meeting should be initiated immediately by Operations or Executive Leadership.