

# **Standard Operating Procedure on Incident Management**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This SOP deals with the management of incidents and reporting of significant incidents in all facilities that come under the purview of the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).

1.2 The occurrence of any incident of a serious nature in VWO facilities, and how it is managed subsequently, will have an impact on public confidence in the VWOs and the social service sector as a whole. Therefore, potential crises should be detected and dealt with quickly. Incidents that have already occurred must be managed quickly and decisively to contain disruption and damage. The first priority is to protect lives. MSF must be alerted expeditiously on the occurrence and progress of these incidents, so that it may provide guidance or advice on action to be taken to manage the incident or to seek assistance from external parties, if necessary.

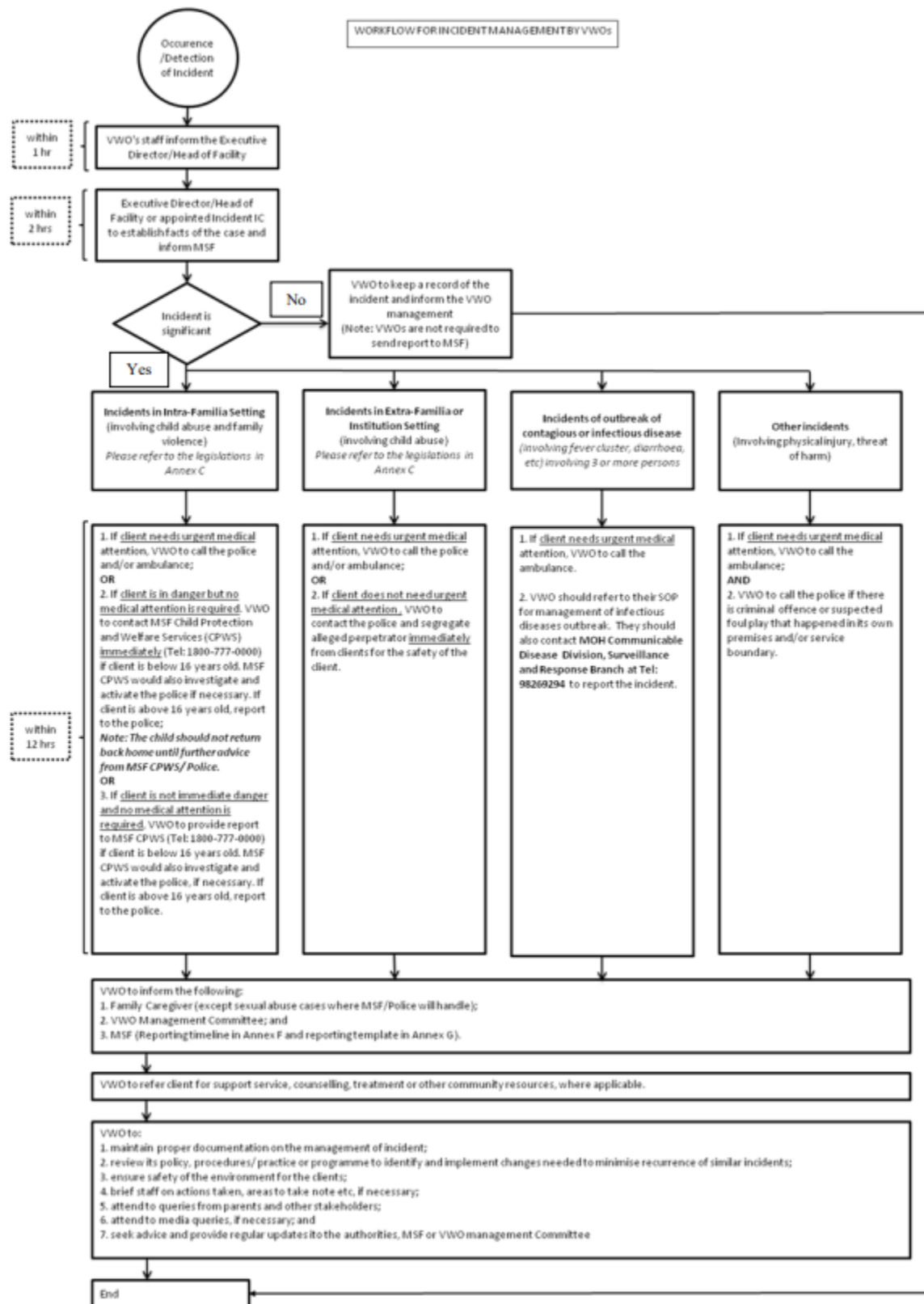
## **2. Incident Management**

2.1 The VWO should have its own SOP for managing different incidents. Following an occurrence or detection of an incident, the staff on duty/in-charge/ at the incident site would need to inform the Executive Director/Head of Facility, or in his/her absence, an identified covering staff. The workflow is shown in Annex A.

2.2 The Executive Director/Head of Facility or appointed Incident IC will establish the facts of the case. It is important to exercise judgment and avoid asking leading questions.

2.3 For sexuality-related incidents when a child (a person who is below the age of 14 years) or young person (a person 14 years of age and above but below 16 years old) is implicated, the questioning techniques to establish basic facts of the case are detailed in Annex B. For incidents that happen within a client's family, where a client below 16 years old is in danger, VWO should contact MSF's Family and Child Protection and Welfare Branch immediately at Tel: 1800-777-0000. The client should not be allowed to return home until further advice from the Family and Child Protection and Welfare Branch or the Police. A list of the legislation in Singapore that is useful for reference by VWOs is given in Annex C.

### 3. Annex A



**Note:**

For sexual offences involving clients below 16 years old, police report should be made. For clients above 16 years old who are involved in sexual contacts, they need to be educated on safe sex and the dangers/risks, although they are not committing crime against the law. If sexual offences or contacts started when clients were below 16 years of age, a police report should be made although the clients are above 16 years old when the incidents are reported to the schools or homes/hostels.

**4. Annex B****QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES TO ESTABLISH BASIC FACTS FOR  
SEXUALITY-RELATED INCIDENTS INVOLVING A CHILD**

Incident IC or designated person to conduct interview with alleged victim to note the following questions to gather basic facts of the incident (within the first 3 hours):

Have gentle, non-judgmental discussions with the child

Expressing your concern that he or she looks sad or unwell can result in disclosures

Do not pressure the child to respond and do not ask leading questions that put words into the child's mouth

Assure the child they can come and talk when they need to

Information that needs to be collected is as follows:

- o The name and age of the alleged victim
- o The name of the alleged perpetrator
- o The relationship of the alleged perpetrator with the victim
- o The nature of contact (e.g. touch, intercourse) of the incident (and whether there are others involved)
- o The person(s) whom the alleged victim had told about the incident

**Notes:**

1. Appoint a key person (Social Worker) to conduct the interview with alleged victim to avoid repeat interview.

2. Incident IC should not conduct a repeat interview if the alleged victim had informed a staff of the facts of the case.

3. Alleged perpetrator should not be alerted or questioned.

4. Alleged perpetrator is to be segregated from clients for the safety of the clients.

5. Alleged perpetrator to be told simply that there were some concerns (without mentioning details) and his duties are suspended or reassigned while investigation is going on. Proper notice should be served to the alleged perpetrator if it is a staff.

6. No photograph should be taken of the injuries on the alleged victim's body.

## **5. Annex C**

### LEGISLATION IN SINGAPORE THAT ARE USEFUL FOR REFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS ACT (CHAPTER 38)

<b>Section</b>	<b>Header</b>
2	Interpretation
4(a) to (h)	When child or young person in need of care and protection
5(1) to (2)	Treatment of child or young person
9(1)	Power to remove child or young person to place of safety, etc
18	Powers of arrest
87(1) to (4)	Information relating to children and young persons in need of care or protection

#### 2. WOMEN'S CHARTER (CHAPTER 353)

<b>Section</b>	<b>Header</b>
140(1)	Offences relating to prostitution
143	Permitting girl below the age of 16 to use premises for sexual penetration
145(1)	Causing or encouraging prostitution of, sexual penetration with, or indecent assault on, girl below the age of 16
9(1)	Power to remove child or young person to place of safety, etc
18	Powers of arrest
87(1) to (4)	Information relating to children and young persons in need of care or protection

## **6. Annex D**

### **SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS TO BE REPORTED**

**1. Examples of significant incidents may include (but are not confined) to the following:**

#### **Clients / Staff / Visitors**

- Mass outbreak of contagious or infectious diseases\* (involving 3 or more persons) such as fever cluster, diarrhoea, etc
- Mass food poisoning/ dengue fever\* (involving 3 or more persons)
- Conflicts between two or more parties from different racial or religious groups with racial or religious connotations where communal discord might result
- Fighting or rioting (involving 3 or more persons)
- Assault on staff and/or client
- Missing persons\*\* (especially a child or a senior)
- Coercion of service users by employees
- Misbehaviour of employees at work or at events, including alleged sexual misconduct and suppressing of evidence of a serious incident
- Arrest or detention of any employee, client, or resident
- Suicide or attempted suicide
- Abuse\*\*\* (e.g. physical/sexual/emotional/psychological/financial abuse or neglect)
- Unnatural death of an employee, client, resident or visitors within the premises or service boundary
- Death or life-threatening injury caused by accident or use of force including accidents that require hospital consultation
- Hospitalisation resulting from accidents such as falls

- Death at client's home undetected (especially for Senior Activity Centres)

\*\* For suspected outbreak of contagious or infectious diseases (involving 3 or more persons) such as fever cluster, diarrhoea, etc, VWO Incident IC should make an assessment of the situation and thereafter contact MSF for further required followup actions. \*\*For missing-persons, the VWO IC should conduct a preliminary search, obtain assistance from the police within the hour of the incident and inform the next-of-kin. Thereafter, the incident should be reported to MSF.

\*\* For abuse cases that occur within the family, involving children/youths below 16 years old, VWO Incident IC should report to Family and Child Protection and Welfare Branch at Tel No. 1800-777 0000.