

### OVERVIEW

This plan is intended to prepare the organizing committee for immediate action when a serious incident occurs on the cross country course.

In the event of serious injury or death of an athlete, there will be significant media interest and pressure upon the Organizing Committee to explain the cause.

In such circumstances, all relevant parties must take quick, decisive and concerted action. This plan affects Equestrian SA, Equestrian Australia, FEI and certain government departments – (e.g. Police, Hospitals)

Procedures detailed in this contingency plan must be adhered to strictly. Any deviation from this plan must be agreed upon by all relevant parties.

### INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Incident Management Team (IMT) will oversee all aspects of a serious incident.

Role	Name	Contact
Chair of the Event President		
Media Manager		
Technical Delegate		
Event Doctors		
Event Veterinarian		
SIEC Representative		
IMT Secretary		

## RESPONSE PLAN

### Step 1 Activate the Incident Management Team

- The Incident Management Team (IMT) will be activated by a decision of the Event President, in consultation with the Technical Delegate.
- Those persons who are to be members of the IMT are to be identified prior to the start of the competition.
- A preliminary meeting of the IMT must be convened before the competition commences.
- Each member of the IMT must be excused from the direct running of the competition in the event of a serious incident in order to manage the incident properly.
- In the event of a serious incident, all members of the IMT must be involved.
- As soon as an incident occurs, the head of the IMT is responsible for the dissemination of relevant information.
- The Board Room of Equestrian SA will be used for meetings.

### Step 2 First Response

Normal radio communication procedures with XC Control and all officials will be followed.

- a. The Fence Judge will report an accident to the XC Controller, who will alert the Event Veterinarian, Para Medic, Recovery Crew and responsible Sector Steward.
- b. The XC Controller will dispatch the Recovery Crew, equipped with screens, to the scene.
- c. The XC Controller will assess the severity of the incident based on information from the Fence Judge and Sector Controller. If it is determined that the accident is so serious that it constitutes a 'incident' for the purposes of this plan, the XC controller shall inform all officials on the course and halt the competition while rescue is underway at the fence.
- d. In accordance with established Eventing competition procedures, all competitors on course will be stopped at the nearest 'Holding Point' or before they jump a fence until the course is cleared and XC Control orders that the competition resumes.
- e. On the basis of information that is available, the Event President will liaise with the Technical Delegate and decide whether to activate the IMT.
- f. The Secretary of the IMT will be tasked to contact IMT members and assemble them at the meeting room.

If a fatal accident of an athlete occurs, immediate action shall be taken as follows:

- a. The Recovery Crew to put screens around the accident immediately while any treatment is taking place.
- b. Medical team to call for ambulance when appropriate.
- c. Move rider into ambulance as quickly as possible, subject to medical advice, and have the course cleared to continue the competition if appropriate.
- d. Recovery Crew to repair ground or fence if necessary.
- e. Fence Judges to be replaced in case of a fatality and taken to meeting room where they will be required to write independent statements. Any other experienced equestrian people who witnessed the accident should also be asked to make statements.
- f. The Fence Judge may need assistance following a serious accident.
- g. Keep media and photographers at a distance - Stewards will ask them to observe proper equestrian etiquette and refrain from filming or photographing.
- h. Public announcer should be instructed to inform spectators that there is a hold up on the course; no details of the accident should be disclosed.

### Step 3 Co-ordinate Related Activities

The IMT must:

- a. gather information and establish the facts of the incident and record on Annex A - Cross Country Incident Form.
- b. inform any essential contacts (i.e., athlete's next of kin, Event officials, etc).
- c. engage a trauma counselling consultant to help affected people.
- d. dispatch a representative (with mobile phone) to the relevant hospital. This person shall:
  - Be a direct link with the IMT to provide details of injuries or death pronouncement and to record details of responsible doctor or staff at the hospital.
  - Arrange help with the immediate problems of the rider's family and/or team/friends and/or horse owner.

### Step 4 Cooperate with the Police

The TD is to be the main contact with the Police. The TD shall ensure that:

- a. The location of the incident is taped off.
- b. Nothing is done to interfere with the crime scene.
- c. Relevant personnel (Course Designer, Jump Judge, Sector Controller, XC Controller, Rider's family etc) are available to talk to the Police.
- d. The rider details are obtained from the event secretary.
- e. The Police contact details are recorded.

### Step 5 Communicate with Stakeholders

The Media Manager or the Event President should make all official statements to the media. No one else is to make statements to the media, even if the statement concerns only medical, veterinary, or technical information. Annex B should be used as a template for the statement.

#### Statements to be made

The Media Manager should issue a holding statement and use only this holding statement in dealing with telephone enquiries. The statement will enable the maker to avoid being drawn into long telephone conversations, but offer to fax/email the full press statement once it is prepared. The holding statement shall conform to the following limitations:

- Written  
"The organisers are investigating the facts surrounding the accident. As soon as these are available, a full statement will be issued and a press conference held."
- Verbal  
"I/We do not have the full details of the circumstances surrounding the accident. As soon as these are available, a full statement will be issued."
- On the death of an athlete  
"An athlete has suffered fatal injuries but no further information will be released until the next-of-kin have been informed."

#### Statement makers should be:

- Calm
- Objective
- Clear and factual
- Brief
- Responsible and concerned

**Step 6 Hold Press Conference**

- a. Assemble the media in the ESA conference room.
- b. Note names of journalists and their organisations.
- c. The media are to be addressed by the Event President and Media Manager. Be as brief as possible, outlining this format at the outset:
  - A statement will be read
  - Questions will be taken
  - Personal interviews will be arranged
- d. Use Annex C Sample Media Questions as a guide to responding to media questions.

**Step 6 Distribute Press Statement**

- a. The press statement should be posted on the official website of the event.
- b. The statement should be issued upon request to other media including local newspapers, radio and TV.
- c. In addition to distribution to the media, the press statement should also go to:
  - e. Local police and emergency services
  - f. The event's legal and insurance advisers
  - g. The event venue provider (SIEC)
  - h. Local authorities

**Step 7 Conduct De-briefing**

Before dispersing, the IMT should hold an internal de-briefing to confirm in everyone's minds precisely what happened and to arrange how to move forward.

Information to be established

1) Rider or public fatality/serious injury

Mr/Mrs/Miss      Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First name \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality \_\_\_\_\_  
From where? \_\_\_\_\_  
Based where? \_\_\_\_\_  
Married?      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Children      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If Yes how many? \_\_\_\_\_

2) Horse

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gelding  Mare  Stallion   
Owner \_\_\_\_\_

3) Additional Information

Vet attending \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctor(s) attending \_\_\_\_\_  
Fence Judges \_\_\_\_\_

4) Nature of incident

Time occurred \_\_\_\_\_  
Fence number/area (e.g. grandstand) \_\_\_\_\_  
What happened? (Fact not hearsay) \_\_\_\_\_  
How many injured? \_\_\_\_\_

5) Injuries

Rider \_\_\_\_\_  
Horse \_\_\_\_\_  
Member of public \_\_\_\_\_  
Workforce \_\_\_\_\_

6) How is the incident being handled?

Hospital name (NB not for release to the media) \_\_\_\_\_

7) Have witness statements been taken?

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8) Background

How many horses cleared the fence prior to the accident?

\_\_\_\_\_

How many completed the course

\_\_\_\_\_

How many riders had retired?

\_\_\_\_\_

9) Prognosis

If injuries, what is result?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Public or Rider fatality

“It is with the deepest regret that we announce that Mr/Mrs/Miss (first and last names) suffered a fatal accident while competing/spectating at the .....  
at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm on \_\_\_\_\_ (date). \_\_\_\_\_ (first name),  
aged \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ (home town) was/was not married, with  
\_\_\_\_\_ children. \_\_\_\_\_’s (first name) horse \_\_\_\_\_, owned  
by \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_-year-old gelding/mare/stallion \_\_\_\_\_ (description  
of incident, eg: stumbled and fell over the rails at fence 15). \_\_\_\_\_ (first name) e.g.: was thrown  
off the horse which, in falling, struck the rider’s head, causing fatal injuries.”

The press may ask about the dimensions of the fence at which the accident happened. This information should not be divulged. A member of the press may measure the fence incorrectly and dispute your measurements. A suggested reply to avoid this is:

- “All fences on the course are within the dimensions specified in the rules and no details will be discussed before the Coroner’s Inquest.”

Try to avoid saying how many horses had successfully jumped the fence before the accident (it smacks of a whitewash) but be prepared for a question and work out how many.

A standard paragraph should be included, along the lines of one of these:

- “At every Equestrian SA event, the maximum consideration is given to the safety and welfare of horses and competitors. Ms Judy Fasher, Chair of Equestrian Australia, said: On behalf of the whole sport, I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to \_\_\_\_\_’s (first name) family.”

or:

- i. “On the extremely rare occasions a rider suffers a fatal accident at an Eventing competition; it is a tragic loss. The thoughts and prayers of horse people all over the country are with her/his family at this sad time.”

For further information contact:

Telephone number(s):

Again, do not mention the dimensions of the fence.

1. Cruelty

Q - There is a gathering opinion that these events are cruel to horses. Do you agree?

A - At every FEI event, the maximum consideration is given to the safety and welfare of both horse and rider.

2. Bad weather

Q - Do you think the event should have been stopped (sooner) because of the weather?

A - Conditions are constantly monitored by the Ground Jury, a panel of international and nationally recognised judges. Had the members of the Ground Jury considered that the conditions were not safe, they would have made the decision to halt the event with the utmost speed.

3. Money

Q - Isn't it fair to say you are more interested in the gate receipts than the animals' welfare?

A - No, it isn't fair to say that - extensive insurance policies taken out before the event cover all aspects of income, including gate receipts.

4. Danger

Q - Doesn't this incident prove that the sport is too dangerous?

A - Eventing is a challenge to the combined skills of both the horse and rider. To meet those challenges successfully requires the same input of patience and talent that is needed in any other walk of life.

Q - Aren't the obstacles too dangerous? Isn't it time they were made less severe?

A - The obstacles are designed to present a fair challenge of skills. Experienced course designers set out to ask realistic questions of horse and rider.

5. Request for detail

Q - What exactly happened out there? What caused the incident?

A - I don't have the full details. A full statement will be made as soon as possible.

6. Briefing of riders

At the riders' briefing, they should be told simply how to cope with approaches by the media in adverse situations. A suggested response might be:

"I cannot comment at the moment, but I understand all the facts are being gathered for a press statement by the event director/organiser."