

OBIT/MAJOR INCIDENT POLICY

The station and its members must be prepared, ready and able to react to big breaking news stories that have global or considerable national significance.

The station will have a big part to play especially when the news story is, for example, on the scale of the 9/11 New York terrorist attacks, the 7/7 London bombings, or the death of a prominent member of the Royal Family. Additionally, very significant local events or disasters, usually in which there has been considerable loss of life, may require the use of the following procedures.

In times such as these, all presenters, regardless of the type of show they are doing, or the time of day, must be willing to modify, significantly alter, or drop their show content in its entirety, or even give way to another presenter.

OBIT/Major Incidents are almost always declared as such by Sky/IRN. However, if the event is within the station's local area and is of great significance, these procedures may be declared by the station's management.

PROCEDURE

1. In the event that a major incident is declared as per Sky's procedures, management members will liaise and, where appropriate, make their way to the studio or be in contact for advice, guidance and support.
2. Other personnel (presenters, newsreaders, etc.) may, if they are available, make their way to the studio to await further instructions as to whether or not additional assistance may be required, both on-air and off-air.
3. The station's website will be kept updated at all times
4. The Head of Programming or, in his absence, the collective decision of those management members available at the time, should decide what changes need to be made to the programme on-air to reflect the nature and seriousness of the incident in progress.
5. The changes made to the programming on-air may include, but are not limited to (in order of escalation):
 - a) changing the music of the show to better suit the seriousness of the incident
 - b) changing the station imaging to reflect what has happened to better suit the seriousness of the incident
 - c) terminating current show features and/or on-air interviews in progress with guests

- d) dropping (where applicable) local news bulletins and – even if sponsored travel, weather and sport
 - e) dropping advert breaks altogether
 - f) dropping the playing of music altogether and reverting to a speech-only format in very serious situations
 - g) changing, with little or no warning, the presenter who is currently on-air
 - h) adding to the show the input of other presenters, qualified management members and members of the news team to assist and comment on the incident as events unfold
6. If the incident is deemed serious enough to warrant Sky News being relayed on the IRN1 channel (see Sky's own procedures) and if, in the opinion of the management present, The 'Bridge is not in a position to cover the story in enough detail given the seriousness of the situation, a management member may make the decision to remove the current show from air and switch to Sky News's TV feed, via the IRN fader.
 7. If the Sky News TV feed is taken, a competent presenter or broadcast-qualified member of the management should occasionally dip into the feed explaining to listeners that they are listening to Black Country Radio and outlining what has happened and that they are listening to a feed of Sky News TV.
 8. Personnel at the studio should continue monitoring the IRN NetNewsroom
 9. The presenter on-air should note Sky's procedures with top-of-hour and bottom-of-hour IRN bulletins (see previous page), fading out Sky News TV before each bulletin to explain the situation to listeners, with a reminder that they are listening to Black Country Radio, before returning to the IRN feed for the bulletin.
 10. The Head of Programming or, in his absence, the collective decision of those management members present, should decide if and when to opt-out of Sky News TV and return to in-house programming.
 11. Once in-house programming resumes, due thought should be given to the content of this programming given the circumstances.
 12. The management members should, where possible, remain on site until the OBIT/ Major Incident procedures are stood down by Sky News/IRN and/or continue to give instruction to on-air personnel.