



3.29 Incident reporting and investigation

Purpose

The purpose of this Information Sheet is to provide information and guidance on Incident reporting and investigation and should be read in conjunction with the [Incident reporting and investigation](#) chapter of the HSW Handbook.

Q1 Should I report all incidents/safety issues in the workplace?

Yes. It is important that all incidents/safety issues are reported as this enables the circumstances to be reviewed and investigated as appropriate.

Q2 What is an incident/safety issue?

An incident is an event that causes or could cause harm (injury, illness or damage) to persons, plant material or the environment including a “near miss”.

A safety issue includes a Hazard Notification whereby an uncontrolled hazardous situation is identified which could cause harm. (e.g. ceiling tiles hanging loose or an electricity failure due to a faulty toaster.)

Q3 Who should I notify in the event of an incident or urgent safety issue?

You should notify the issue to your immediate supervisor or person in control of the activity/area in the first instance if it relates to an activity you are undertaking or is in your area of work.

If your Supervisor/Manager or person in control of the area is not available and the safety issue is urgent, you should pass the details on to your local [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Contact](#).

Q4 How do I report an incident/safety issue?

You can lodge a report and optional photo of the incident/issue directly via the University's on-line reporting System (UniSafe) using the [UniSafe mobile app](#). Alternatively you can report the incident/issue via the [UniSafe website](#).

Q5 What should I do if someone is injured due to an incident/safety issue?

The first step is always to ensure the person involved receives appropriate medical attention, and to ensure the area is safe for others. If the incident/issue is in your area of work, this should occur in consultation with the Supervisor/person responsible for the area/activity.

Q6 What should I do next i.e. after I have lodged a formal report of an incident/safety issue?

If you have lodged a formal report, your local HSWO or the relevant HSWO (if a different area), will review the incident details provided and may ask some additional questions. Further full investigation of the incident/safety issue may occur, depending on the nature of the incident/issue and level of risk.

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Q7 What happens if there is a serious injury (e.g. requiring immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital) or dangerous incident (e.g. a person is exposed to a serious risk of injury from an immediate or imminent exposure to an incident/safety issue, regardless of whether they are injured or not)?

Immediately after the person involved has been transported for treatment (e.g. by ambulance) and/or the area made safe (including preservation and securing of the site), the Manager/Supervisor should immediately notify the [Senior HSW Advisor or Associate Director, HSW](#).

The University is required by the WHS legislation to notify SafeWork SA of certain serious incidents. The definition of what is considered to be a notifiable incident is included in the [Incident reporting and investigation](#) chapter of the HSW Handbook. (Safe work Australia also provide an [Incident Notification Information Sheet](#) which can assist in determining the mandatory reporting requirements and also provides a number of different examples of what it does and doesn't include.)

The Associate Director, HSW/Senior HSW Advisor will determine if the incident falls within the definition and will need the following factual information from the relevant area in the first instance.

- Where and when.
- What work was being performed at the time of the incident.
- What happened.
- What plant/equipment was being used at the time.
- What caused the incident/injury.
- Who was involved and their contact details.
- The details of the injuries and if they required immediate treatment in hospital where and if admitted (if applicable).

For noting

It is important to note, that In addition to immediate treatment as an in-patient in hospital and an obvious serious injury/or illness, medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance is also a notifiable incident.

A substance includes exposure to:

- chemicals;
- airborne contaminants; and
- exposure to human and/or animal blood and body substances.

Medical treatment also includes any treatment provided by a doctor for exposures where prophylactic “medical treatment” has been provided within 48 hours of exposure. This includes post exposure treatment prophylaxis for HIV, lyssavirus, tetanus etc following a needlestick or exposure to human or animal blood/body substances.

Therefore Managers/Supervisors need to be cognizant of the fact that there is an extended 48 hr period for some incidents which will require monitoring and reporting where required.

Following the incident/injury report, the investigation will require a comprehensive report which includes in addition to the above:

- What was identified during the investigation as contributing factors (i.e. causes);
- Copies of relevant risk assessments and safe operating procedures (if applicable);
- Copies of any instruction/training records (if applicable);
- What corrective action is planned (these should address the contributing factors);
- What corrective action has been completed to prevent a recurrence (including revised risk assessments and safe operating procedures (if applicable).

SafeWork SA may/may not attend on site. If the University is advised that they will be attending, under normal circumstances, representatives from the HSW Team and relevant School/Branch/Area would be present.

The post incident investigation should be completed in accordance with the HSW Handbook [chapter Incident reporting and investigation](#). Updates and provision of documents to SafeWork SA may be required as part of their investigation.

For further information

Should you require any information please contact your [HSW contact](#) as a priority, as failing to report a notifiable incident is an offence under the WHS Act and penalties apply.

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