

# Incident Report Guidance

*This guidance is intended to support your overarching approach to incident management by highlighting key aspects that should be considered to implement an effective incident management system.*

## INCIDENT GOVERNANCE

**Ensure these key good governance elements are implemented to support your incident management system:**

1. Incident policy to outline your organisation's approach to the management and prevention of incidents.
2. Incident processes that are available to all staff to report and take actions following an incident.
3. Incident investigation procedures to guide reviews and corrective actions.
4. Incident notification steps to regulators and insurers are clearly documented and followed.
5. Incident management reporting system is digital/software based and not reliant on paper-based approaches. Making incident reporting easy for everyone is critical to a good reporting culture.
6. Incident records are maintained and secured for future reference.

## INCIDENT CULTURE

**Create a "safety culture" that encourages incident reporting:**

1. Incidents (including near-misses) are viewed as important improvement opportunities and not intended to "blame". People should feel safe to report an incident.
2. Steps to report incident.
3. Incident report documents are easy to follow, include all categories of relevant information required and are viewed and signed-off by the relevant manager.
4. Ensure accountabilities to respond to and investigate incidents are clear and problems remedied in a timely way.
5. Be clear about "notifiable" incidents; ensure management staff receive training and guidance on compulsory reporting obligations.
6. Share lessons learnt from incidents across the organisation and improve systems and practices that contribute to the risk of further incidents or near-misses occurring.

# INCIDENT REPORT STEPS AND GUIDANCE



(refer to Ansvar “Incident Report Tool” for template guidance)

SECTION 1 - DETAILS OF PERSON MAKING THIS REPORT INCIDENT	
Complete the full details of the person making the report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full details of the person making the report.</li> <li>• Ensure contact details are noted</li> </ul>
SECTION 2 - INCIDENT DETAILS	
Time and Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time, date and location the incident occurred.</li> <li>• Be specific e.g. Entry corridor, Level 1, 100 Browns Road.</li> <li>• Be objective (do not provide opinions or judgements).</li> </ul>
<p>Describe the nature of the Incident and what occurred</p> <p>Do not apportion blame or immediately accept responsibility for any outcome.</p> <p><i>Saying sorry is not a bad thing - however it should be on the basis that it acknowledges the incident occurred, not immediately accepting responsibility. Ensure your incident policy guides the process of saying sorry (sometimes referred to as ‘open disclosure’).</i></p>	<p>Provide a detailed and clear description of exactly what happened:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of any person(s) involved in the incident.</li> <li>• Full explanation of the incident.</li> <li>• What happened leading up to the incident.</li> <li>• Contributing factors.</li> <li>• Any injuries/outcomes etc.</li> <li>• Any comments / responses made to individuals involved.</li> </ul> <p>Attach any photos, videos, documents (e.g. statements) or links to documents that are relevant to the incident.</p>
If a person has been injured, describe the nature and body part of the injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List the injuries (physical / psychological) that have been noted.</li> <li>• If medical/ambulance has been called, list any information provided to add to this report.</li> <li>• Provide details of any first aid-provided and note the response from the intervention.</li> <li>• Note if next of kin / key contact has been notified of the incident.</li> <li>• If staff, volunteer or contractor, take immediate action to follow your Workplace Health and Safety Policy.</li> </ul>
If the incident involves a client or child, was the incident of a Physical or Sexual Abuse nature?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take <i>immediate</i> action to follow your Preventing Physical and Sexual Abuse Policy (this includes obligations and responsibilities to notify authorities and your Insurer).</li> <li>• Ensure the most senior manager or supervisor is notified.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 2 - INCIDENT DETAILS (Continued)

If the incident involves a death, escalate immediately to your supervisor for next actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Take immediate actions to follow your Death / Serious Injury Procedures (this includes obligations and responsibilities to notify your supervisor, authorities and relevant others).</li></ul>
Was any equipment, furniture or structures involved in the incident?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If a client, visitor, contractor or staff member (or carer) was using or was harmed by any equipment, list the equipment name, model and serial number and what it was being used for at the time of the incident.</li><li>If the incident involved tripping or falling, what structures were involved (e.g. Stairs, hand rail, uneven flooring, lighting etc.).</li></ul>

## SECTION 3 - WITNESSES

Were there any witnesses to the incident?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide the names and contact details (phone number) for all witnesses to the incident.</li></ul>
---	---

## SECTION 4 - IMMEDIATE REPORTING AND FOLLOW UP

Was the incident reported to a supervisor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide the names of staff to whom the Incident was reported and the time and date it was reported.</li></ul>
Were any actions immediately recommended by the supervisor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide details of any actions the supervisor advised you to take after the incident. This will assist with any investigation.</li></ul>
External / Media / Requests for Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do not comment or engage with the media. Do not provide the report to any unauthorised people.</li><li>Any external request for Incident Information must be directed to your Supervisor for consideration and action In accordance with your organisation's policies.</li></ul>

## SECTION 5 - REPORTING PERSON SIGNATURE FOLLOW UP

Reporting Person Signature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This section is a declaration that the information is your true and correct recollection of the incident.</li></ul>
----------------------------	---

## SECTION 6 - SUPERVISOR CONFIRMATION

Supervisor confirms receipt of incident report and notes actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This section is a declaration that the information is a true and correct recollection of the incident as provided to you in your role as a Supervisor.</li><li>Include date and time the incident was reported to you.</li><li>Note the actions / next steps for the incident and incident report.</li><li>If the Incident has identified a risk, ensure this is assessed in accordance with your risk management policy and procedures.</li></ul>
---	--

## SECTION 7 - INVESTIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

<p><b>Incident reference ID and incident register.</b></p> <p><i>You should keep an incident register as a repository of all incidents - no matter the severity. Historical incidents may be called on for future claims or investigations. Avoid paper based registers.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All incidents should be given a reference number and the Incident should be recorded and maintained in an incident register.</li> <li>• Follow up on incidents should be listed in the register.</li> <li>• If incidents are investigated, it should be noted in the register when the investigation is completed and the incident is closed.</li> <li>• You should have appropriate controls to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of information, particularly as it relates to clients, public and any personal information of any person.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Is an internal investigation required?</b></p> <p><i>Your incident policy should outline the types of incidents that require investigation. Remember an investigation should be conducted in the spirit of improvement opportunities and not blame.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigations should have oversight of a senior manager in accordance with your incident policy. Some serious incidents must be investigated (regulatory responsibility). Ensure relevant policies are adhered to when taking action.</li> <li>• An investigation report should provide details of the staff member who will be conducting the investigation, including start and completion dates and any other information relevant to the scope of the investigation.</li> <li>• If interviews are conducted, include names, details of questions and responses.</li> <li>• Keep investigation file notes attached to the incident report and note in the incident register. Include rationale for any decisions made, who made the decisions and the date.</li> <li>• Contact your insurance broker for advice regarding notification to your insurance provider and for guidance on investigations if required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do external authorities including police, work place health and safety authorities or any regulators need to be contacted?</b></p> <p><i>Some incidents are “reportable” under various legislation. Make sure your incident policy clearly outlines reportable incidents and actions to take. Serious consequences apply to organisations that do not follow legislative reporting requirements.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide required details of the incident and who reported it to the external body.</li> <li>• Keep a record of the date the incident was reported to external bodies, the person spoken with and the advice provided.</li> <li>• Escalate this information to senior management in accordance with your policies.</li> <li>• Notify your Insurance broker of all reportable Incidents provided to an external body and seek advice on any Insurance policy requirements.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 7 - INVESTIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS (Continued)

<p><b>Holding private / sensitive information</b></p> <p><i>Any investigation, disclosure or holding of information must be handled in accordance with your privacy and /or record keeping policy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep information relating to the incident (including investigation files) together where possible.</li> <li>• Some information may be sensitive / worker related etc. Keep this in accordance with your record keeping policy.</li> <li>• Access to incident information should always be limited to those who require it for the purposes of an organisation's business / services or response to an approved external requirement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Taking action with recommendations</b></p> <p><i>It is important that investigations outline improvement opportunities and it is clear who is accountable for implementing actions. Investigations may also identify risks to the organisation and these must be actioned in accordance with your risk framework.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a record of the investigation within / connected to your incident register (if appropriate) or filed confidentially if necessary.</li> <li>• Outline the organisational improvements identified as a result of the investigation.</li> <li>• Allocate responsibility for actions and monitor completion of tasks. Note when actions are completed.</li> <li>• If any risks are identified, ensure these are managed in accordance with your risk management policy and procedures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the organisation received feedback from the external authority's investigation?</b></p> <p><i>Your incident policy should outline the steps involved in notifying and responding to external bodies.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide updates on any external authority investigations including final report.</li> <li>• Ensure your most senior management / board committee is aware of external body involvement and feedback.</li> <li>• Advise your insurance broker of outcomes of external body, particularly if sanctions or other regulatory actions are enforced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Have improvement actions been communicated to staff and key stakeholders?</b></p> <p><i>Your policy should outline how actions will be communicated.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide incident information, any investigations and actions recommended to appropriate management committees.</li> <li>• Boards / Owners have direct accountabilities for incident management systems and oversight of serious incidents. It must be clear in your policy the role of board/owners with incident management.</li> <li>• Create a communication plan to outline actions recommended and communicate next steps and improvement outcomes to staff and others as appropriate.</li> <li>• Keep your insurance broker briefed on the investigations and outcomes of serious incidents. Insurers take a positive view of organisations that proactively manage incidents and can often provide support or advice with some aspects</li> </ul>

## INCIDENT CLASSIFICATION AND ESCALATION

*Incidents should be classified to determine the type and seriousness of the incident to assist with escalation steps within the organisation (right Information / right time / right person / for the right response)*

An example of an Incident Classification and Escalations guide

INCIDENT CLASSIFICATION	WHAT THIS INCLUDES: (Complete this using the context of your organisation and get agreement from CEO/Board)	ESCALATION / REPORTING
Level 4 Minor Incident		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local site management</li> <li>Verbal notification to manager and completion of Incident report</li> <li>Manager reviews and supports</li> </ul>
Level 3 Moderate Incident		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Site Management.</li> <li>Verbal notification to manager and completion of Incident report.</li> <li>Manager reviews and advises on investigation requirements.</li> <li>Incident is noted for relevant management committee review.</li> </ul>
Level 2 Major Incident		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal notification to Manager and completions of Incident report.</li> <li>Manager immediately reviews incident and briefs Senior Management (CEO).</li> <li>Immediate actions in accordance with notifications (e.g. regulator or other).</li> <li>Likely Investigation: Manager coordinates.</li> <li>Incident is noted for relevant management and board committee.</li> </ul>

**NOTE: This is an example only.** Please consider in the specific context of your organisation, your policies and procedures and your governance arrangements.

## INCIDENT CLASSIFICATION AND ESCALATION (continued)

INCIDENT CLASSIFICATION	WHAT THIS INCLUDES: (Complete this using the context of your organisation and get agreement from CEO/Board)	ESCALATION / REPORTING
Level 1 Extreme Incident		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal notification to Manager Immediately and CEO (within one hour)</li> <li>• Immediate escalation to wider organisation for relevant response and to regulators (as required)</li> <li>• Investigation: Manager to coordinate</li> <li>• Board is notified within 24 hours.</li> <li>• Incident subject of management and board committee review.</li> </ul>

**NOTE: This is an example only.** Please consider in the specific context of your organisation, your policies and procedures and your governance arrangements.

If you would like to speak to someone about your Incident Management program email us at [info@ansvarrisk.com.au](mailto:info@ansvarrisk.com.au)

© 2022 Ansvar Insurance Limited (ABN 21 007 216 506 AFSL No 237826) of Level 5, 1 Southbank Boulevard, Southbank VIC 3006 (Ansvar). Ansvar is a member of the Benefact Group in the UK (formally known as Ecclesiastical Group). All rights reserved, except as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968, no reproduction or communication of any of the content of this document may occur without the permission of Ansvar.

The content contained in this document is of general nature and does not constitute legal, financial or personal advice. Before using this information, you should consider the appropriateness of it having regard to your own business objectives, needs and individual circumstances. To the extent permitted by applicable law Ansvar expressly disclaims all liability howsoever arising from this publication whether in contract, tort or otherwise (including, but not limited to, liability for any negligent act or omission) to any person in respect of any claims or losses of any nature including direct, indirect, incidental or consequential loss, punitive damages, penalties or costs.