

## ADVICE SHEET 5

**Safe business is good business** 

# Reporting safety

## Why do you need safety reporting procedures?

**Because they help you identify health and safety problems and assist with implementing solutions.**

A simple reporting procedure will help you obtain important information about health and safety issues in the workplace, identify problems when they arise, and address them.

**Safety reporting procedures** make it simpler for you and your workers to manage safety issues and prevent recurrences of incidents and injuries. These procedures may also identify safety issues that were previously unnoticed, and will guide you in developing new safe work procedures and improving existing ones. When linked with an incident investigation process, they help you understand why incidents occurred, assist you to make decisions and set priorities, and allow you to analyse trends in safety issues.

### Incident notification

You can notify of an incident and make a claim using Queensland's work health and safety and workers' compensation services at [worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://worksafe.qld.gov.au) or by phoning 1300 362 128. WorkCover Queensland and other workers' compensation insurers have a different role to play to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) following a workplace incident. WHSQ investigates the cause of the incident and how similar incidents can be prevented in the future. WorkCover Queensland and other workers' compensation insurers provide financial compensation to people injured in the course of their employment.

## Where you ticked in the red zone ...

... shows that you are unlikely to have a system that documents safety problems and allows you to develop prevention strategies.

Ticks in the RED zone indicate that you need to take immediate action to ensure that safety issues—incidents, injuries and illnesses—are reported internally, and where the law requires, externally.

<p><b>Involve your workers in developing a safety reporting process</b></p>	<p>You must have a process to record all injuries and incidents that occur at the workplace.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What issues to report</b> – e.g. faulty equipment, hazardous spills, housekeeping issues, injuries, near misses, general safety hazards, suggestions for improving processes etc.</li> <li>• <b>How to report them</b> – establish the process, at the very least, of verbally reporting issues to either supervisors or management. Written reports of issues allow you to track and analyse trends. If possible have workers make suggestions about suitable control strategies.</li> <li>• <b>Who to report issues to</b> – issues should be reported to supervisors or management. You should nominate someone to have authority to act upon the safety reports, such as yourself or a supervisor.</li> <li>• <b>How are issues resolved</b> – if there is a health and safety issue at the workplace, reasonable efforts must be made to achieve a timely, final and effective resolution. Involve your workers in developing an agreed written procedure for issue resolution or follow the default procedure set out in the <i>Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Record safety reports</b></p>	<p>Many of your workplace safety issues will be minor and can be resolved without the need for documentation, particularly if the issue can be addressed immediately.</p> <p>In some situations however, where there is a significant safety issue that cannot be resolved immediately, and following the agreed or default issue resolution procedure, you should make a record of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who made the report</li> <li>• when the report was made</li> <li>• to whom the report was made</li> <li>• nature of the problem</li> <li>• action taken to resolve the problem</li> <li>• management sign-off</li> <li>• any feedback given to the person who reported the issue</li> <li>• any further action required— what, when and by whom?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Encourage worker participation</b></p>	<p>The success of your safety reporting procedure largely rests with your workers—they need to see the benefit of it and be keen to use it.</p> <p>Let them know about the procedures that have been developed and implemented, ensure that everyone is aware of their health and safety responsibilities. Assure workers of your commitment to taking all reports seriously and using them to improve workplace safety.</p> <p>Always keep workers informed about the outcomes of any issues they report. New workers should be advised of these procedures during their induction training.</p>
<p><b>Use your safety reports</b></p>	<p>Your safety reports are an ideal resource from which you can develop and implement safety improvements. When incidents or injuries occur, use the safety reports to review and improve your safe work procedures. Review the reports to identify trends that may help you identify underlying safety problems. Discuss the reports with your workers.</p>
<p><b>Report certain accidents, injuries and illnesses</b></p>	<p>The law requires that workplace fatalities and certain serious incidents (including dangerous events) be reported to WHSQ within specified timeframes.</p> <p>To find out further information on what needs to be reported, how to report the information, and who to report to, contact 1300 362 128 or go to <a href="http://worksafe.qld.gov.au">worksafe.qld.gov.au</a>. Incident Notification Forms (Form 3) can also be downloaded from <a href="http://worksafe.qld.gov.au">worksafe.qld.gov.au</a>.</p> <p>If an employee is seriously injured there are also separate reporting requirements to your workers' compensation insurer.</p> <p>See <i>Advice Sheet 6</i> for more information about workers' compensation issues.</p>

## Where you ticked in the orange zone...

**... shows that you are beginning to identify safety problems, but are not doing all you can to prevent their recurrence.**

Ticks in the ORANGE zone indicate that you see benefit in reporting safety issues, but you still need to examine the suitability of procedures and the consistency with which they are followed.

<b>Check workers' understanding of the processes</b>	For your safety reporting procedures to be effective, your workers must understand them. Are the procedures documented? Do your workers have access to a copy? Have you reviewed the procedures with your workers? Is everyone clear about their health and safety responsibilities?
<b>Review and update responsibilities periodically</b>	Sometimes, when changes occur in your workforce, responsibilities for health and safety issues may need to be re-allocated. Ensure that everyone is aware of new roles and responsibilities. Don't allow follow-up action on safety issues to stall due to personnel changes. Having a written register of reported issues will greatly assist in this process.
<b>Review safe work procedures</b>	<p>When an incident or injury occurs in your workplace, it may indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is no safe work procedure for the task and it poses a significant risk</li> <li>• the current procedure isn't effective</li> <li>• your workers are not following the safe work procedure.</li> </ul> <p>After an incident or injury, review your safe work procedures and make changes or develop new procedures when inadequacies become apparent.</p> <p>Your safety reports should trigger a review of your procedures, training and supervision.</p>

## Where you ticked in the green zone...

**... shows that your workers are following procedures for reporting safety issues, and problems are acted upon.**

Ticks in the GREEN zone indicate that you have implemented a system for reporting safety issues and incidents, and ensure that safety reports are acted upon and corrective measures taken.

<b>Look for continuous improvement opportunities</b>	<p>Use your safety reports as a management tool to continually improve safety in your workplace. Information from the safety reports may indicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• problems with your equipment</li> <li>• difficulties with the workplace layout</li> <li>• flaws in your procedures.</li> </ul> <p>Consult openly and regularly with your workers about continual workplace safety improvement opportunities.</p>
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## Example internal incident report form

Incident details		
Name of person reporting incident:		
Person/s involved in incident:	Date of incident:	
Location of incident:		
What task was being performed at the time of the incident?		
What happened?		
What factors contributed to the incident?		
Environment (e.g. lighting, layout)	Equipment/materials (e.g. guarding, maintenance)	
Work systems (e.g. hazard not identified or reported)	People (e.g. fatigue, communication)	
Corrective actions:		
Contributing factor (from above list)		
What are we going to do to fix the problem?		
Who	When	Completion date
Issue fixed?		
Name	Signature	Date
Person involved in incident:		
Manager:		

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