



University of Otago

ISO45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management System

TITLE: Event Reporting and Investigation

OHSMS REF: Incident Reporting, Investigations and Corrective Actions

Event Management, Reporting and Investigation

1 Purpose

The purpose of reporting events allows for focussed action to reduce our exposure to risks. Occupational Health and Safety-related classifications are applied to reports to code various aspects in a consistent manner. These classifications are:

Hazards/unsafe conditions/near miss: those hazards that could pose a risk to a person's health or safety, including instances of unsafe work practices, the environment (e.g. air, land, water) and allegations by a staff member of being subjected to unacceptable behaviours.

Incidents: an unplanned event where equipment has been damaged or where individuals have been harmed.

Notifiable event: a serious incident or injury where someone's health or safety is seriously endangered. A notifiable event is required to be reported to WorkSafeNZ or Maritime NZ.

Near miss/unsafe conditions: an event that has not resulted in equipment damage or injury, but had the potential to damage equipment or cause harm, or where there is an unsafe condition or environment that has the potential to cause damage or harm (e.g. spills on the floor, torn carpet). These conditions may also be entered or notified as hazards into Vault. The resulting action should be to eliminate the unsafe condition or a change in procedures/processes to remove the potential for damage or injury.

2 Reporting an event

All events involving persons on site are reportable. Near miss and incidents are indicators of potential injuries and illnesses, and need to be investigated in the same manner as injury events.

To report an event, you can:

- Talk to your DHSO, Health and Safety (H&S) Representative or your HOD/Manager/Supervisor.
- Enter the event through the web portal at www.otago.ac.nz/healthandsafety
- Vault notify App.

Once the event is entered into Vault, an investigator will be allocated by the Health and Safety (H&S) Team.

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3 Notifiable events

The term 'serious harm' has been replaced by 'notifiable event' under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

A notifiable event occurs when any of the following happens as a **result of work**:

Death

Except those unrelated to work, such as:

- a diabetic dying at work;
- a worker being killed while driving to work in his or her private vehicle when driving is not done as part of their work;
- death of patients that are triggered by a medical reason.

However, any death must be reported to the H&S Team and senior management immediately.

Notifiable illness or injury

- An injury or illness that requires or would usually require someone to be admitted to hospital for immediate treatment.

Notifiable incident

- Where someone's health or safety is seriously endangered or threatened by an unplanned or uncontrolled event, even if they are some distance away, e.g. gas leak.

The term notifiable requires the notification to authorities by the University's H&S Team when a work-related serious injury or incident occurs.

Examples of notifiable illness or injury:

All injuries or illnesses that require (or would normally require) a person to be admitted to hospital for immediate treatment are notifiable. Admitted to hospital means being admitted to hospital as an inpatient for any length of time – it doesn't include being taken to hospital for outpatient treatment by a hospital's Emergency Department or for corrective surgery at a later time, such as straightening a broken nose.

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Other types of injuries and illnesses that also require notification are set out in the following table:

Trigger	Examples
The amputation of any part of the body that requires immediate treatment (other than first aid).	<p>Amputation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limb (for example, an arm or leg). • Other parts of the body (for example, hand, foot, finger, toe nose, ear).
A serious head injury that requires immediate treatment other than first aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fractured skull. • A head injury that results in losing consciousness. • Blood clot or bleeding in the brain. • Damage to the skull that may affect organ or facial function. • A head injury that results in temporary or permanent memory loss.
A serious eye injury that requires immediate treatment other than first aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury that results in, or is likely to result in, the loss of an eye or vision (total or partial). • An injury caused by an object entering the eye (for example, a metal fragment, wood chip). • Contact with any substance that could cause serious eye damage. <p>Does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to a substance or object that only causes discomfort to the eye.
A serious burn that requires immediate treatment other than first aid.	<p>A burn that needs intensive or critical care such as a compression garment or skin graft.</p> <p>Does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A burn treatable by washing the wound and applying a dressing.
Skin separating from an underlying tissue (degloving or scalping) that requires immediate treatment other than first aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin separating from underlying tissue where the tendons, bones, or muscles are exposed.

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Trigger	Examples
A spinal injury that requires immediate treatment other than first aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury to the cervical, thoracic, lumbar or sacral vertebrae, including discs and spinal cord. <p>Does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back strain or bruising.
Loss of a bodily function that requires immediate treatment other than first aid (for example, through electric shock or acute reaction to substance used at work).	<p>Loss of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consciousness (includes fainting due to a work-related cause for example, from exposure to a harmful substance or heat). • Speech • Movement of a limb • Function of an internal organ. • Senses (for example, smell, touch, taste, sight or hearing). <p>Does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fainting not due to a work related cause. • A sprain, strain or fracture that does not require admission to hospital (except for skull and spinal fractures).
Serious lacerations that require immediate treatment other than first aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious deep cuts that cause muscle, tendon, nerve or blood vessel damage, or permanent impairment. • Tears to flesh or tissue – this may include stitching or other treatment to prevent loss of blood or bodily function and/or the wound getting infected. <p>Does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superficial cuts treatable by cleaning the wound and applying a dressing. • Minor tears to flesh or tissue.

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Trigger	Examples
An injury or illness that require (or would normally require) medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance (a natural or artificial substance in any form for example sold, liquid, gas or vapour).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burns from skin exposure or inhalation of toxic chemicals that require medical treatment.
Contracting a serious infection (including occupational zoonoses) to which the carrying out of work is a significant contributing factor including any infection due to carrying out work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> with micro-organisms that involves contact with human blood or bodily substance that involves handling or contact with animals, their hides, skins, wool or hair, animal carcasses or waste products, or that involves handling or contact with fish or marine mammal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diseases caught from animals (for example, leptospirosis) or E. coli infections Legionnaires disease caught from working with soil, compost or potting mix.

Examples of notifiable incidents

Notifiable incidents are unplanned or uncontrolled in a workplace and expose people to serious risk.

There could be immediate or imminent exposure to any of the following:

- a substance escaping, spilling or leaking;
- an implosion, exposure or fire;
- gas or steam escaping;
- a pressurised substance escaping;
- electric shock (from anything that could cause a lethal shock, for example, it would not include shocks due to static electricity, from extra low voltage equipment or from defibrillators used for medical reasons);
- the fall or release from height of any plant, substance or thing;
- damage to or collapse, overturning, failing or malfunctioning of any plant that is required to be authorised for use under regulations;

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- the collapse or partial collapse of a structure;
- the collapse or failure of an excavation or any shoring supporting an excavation;
- the rush of water, mud, or gas in workings in an underground excavation or tunnel;
- the interruption of the main system of ventilation in an underground excavation or tunnel;
- a collision between two vessels, a vessel capsize, or the rush of water into a vessel;
- any other incident declared in regulation to be a notifiable incident, for example those listed in Health and Safety at Work regulations.

3.1 Onsite management actions

Sequence of immediate response actions in a notifiable event:

- Protect your health and safety.
- Protect the health and safety of others.
- Call for help: Emergency Services: 1 – 111 and Campus Watch: 5000
- Provide first aid, if it is safe to do so, to any injured persons involved in the event.
- Take immediate actions required to make the site safe and prevent further incidents or harm.
- Do not disturb the scene as much as possible where the event happened.
- Immediately contact your manager and the Health and Safety Office.

NB: The H&S Manager is responsible for notifying events to WorkSafe.

Preserving the scene:

The senior person on site who manages or controls the workplace must preserve the site and ensure it is not disturbed.

A WorkSafe NZ Inspector will give permission for normal work to resume. Until then, no interference and preservation means:

- The work set-up should not be changed.
- Substances or other things involved in the event should stay where they are.
- Work that could interfere with the scene of the event should stop.
- No alterations should be made to the plant, vehicles, or structures involved.

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Exceptions to this requirement:

- To help and aid an injured person.
- To remove a deceased person.
- Actions essential to make the site safe or to minimise the risks of a further notifiable event.
- By or under the direction of a Police Officer.
- Permitted by the Regulator (WorkSafe) or an Inspector.

Where a notifiable event has occurred, the employer is required to notify WorkSafe NZ as soon as reasonably possible and the scene must be held. The Health and Safety Office is responsible for making this notification. If you are unsure if an injury or an event is notifiable, hold the scene and contact the H&S Office.

4 Investigations

There are different levels of investigation – routine and formal.

Routine investigations

A designated investigator will be allocated to investigate the incident. In the majority of cases, this will be the DHSO. All investigations are recorded in Vault.

An incident causation analysis will be completed as a part of the investigation to identify the root causes of incidents, and corrective actions recorded as required. Corrective actions are required to be time bound and allocated to an individual staff member responsible for completing the action.

The H&S Team review all incidents and allocate the event to the relevant critical risk group. The team will analyse events and where there are repeat events of a similar nature, or location, further investigation may be initiated. Reports of further analysis and investigation will be documented and recorded in Vault, including any corrective actions identified.

Formal investigations

Where events are high risk, frequent or notifiable, a formal investigation will be conducted by a member of the Advanced Investigation Team, led by a member of the H&S Team. These investigations are recorded on Vault. Formal investigations will be notified to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and reported in the monthly SMT and Council reports.

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5 Event reporting and investigation responsibilities

University employees, contractors and students

Report all work-related injuries, illness, incidents and near miss events.

Supervisors

Assist staff and students in the investigation and identifying corrective actions. Support the rehabilitation and return to work requirements for staff injuries.

Heads of Departments/Directors/Managers/Deans

Ensure effective reporting, investigation and management of events in areas under their control. Be involved in the investigation of events at the request of the DHSO or H&S Office, and for any trending or concerning incidents. Ensure corrective actions are completed.

University Operational Health and Safety Committees

The committees are responsible for reviewing reported events in their representative areas to identify trends, ensure corrective actions are implemented and monitoring of effectiveness. The committees' health and safety objectives should include injury prevention strategies in relation to critical risks. The committees' annual cyclic plan should include a 'deep dive' into a relevant critical risk to monitor compliance of critical controls.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team

The H&S Team and subject matter experts are responsible to ensure there is adequate systems for the effective reporting and investigation of events. The H&S Team members and subject matter experts are responsible to lead investigations into notifiable or significant trending events and provide detailed reports and corrective actions based on the root causes. The H&S Team will engage external expertise when required. The H&S Team is responsible for reporting to Senior Management on events, trends, outcomes and corrective actions resulting from events and investigations. Management of reported events is operating effectively throughout the University. Lead formal investigation of serious injuries and incidents.

The H&S Team is responsible for the notification to regulatory bodies including WorkSafe NZ, MaritimeNZ, MBIE and MPI. Any external notification must be notified to the senior management team within 24 hours of the notification. Undertake all necessary statutory reporting to regulatory bodies.

The H&S Team will notify Senior Management of any Notifiable Events as soon as possible after the event. (See notification form **OHSMS REF: 8.2.0**)

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Confidentiality

Under the Privacy Act, all reports will remain confidential within University of Otago with only those persons listed in the reporting and investigation sequences having access to personal details. Where event reports are provided to committees or others within the University, the names of individuals injured will be redacted to protect the privacy of individuals. This function is available within Vault.

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