

# Guide to work health and safety incident notification

Internal Guideline

# Contents

<b>Document information</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Revision history</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Purpose</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Scope</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Definitions</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Guideline</b> .....	<b>4</b>
4.1 What to report to DHA? .....	4
4.2 How and when to notify? .....	5
4.3 Why report WHS incidents?.....	5
<b>5. Further assistance</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	<b>6</b>

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# Work health and safety incident notification

## Document information

Title	Guide to work health and safety (WHS) incident notification
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Internal documents	Contractor incident report Contractor incident notification flowchart

## Revision history

Version	Revision date	Summary of changes
0.1	02/02/2020	New issue

# Work health and safety incident notification

## 1. Purpose

To provide contractors with guidance on the requirements for notifying DHA in the event a WHS incident occurs.

## 2. Scope

This guideline applies to any contractor DHA engages to conduct works or deliver services at DHA workplaces.

## 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Guideline, the following definitions apply:

**Contractor** means an external party engaged by DHA to conduct works or deliver services at DHA workplaces.

**DHA** means Defence Housing Australia.

**Notifiable incident** means a WHS incident where serious injury/illness has occurred or had the potential to occur.

**PCBU** means a person Conducting Business or Undertaking (includes DHA and contractors).

**WHS** means work health and safety.

**WHS Act** means the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

**WHS incident** means an event or occurrence arising from the PCBU's business or undertaking, including a near miss

**WHS Regulations** means the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*

**Worker** means the person conducting works or delivering a service at a DHA workplace

**Workplace** means a DHA office, DHA-managed property, DHA construction or development site.

## 4. Guideline

Under the WHS Act, DHA (as a PCBU) must immediately notify Comcare after becoming aware that a notifiable incident arising from the business or undertaking has occurred. Where an incident is a notifiable incident, a contractor must notify DHA immediately. Where the incident is not notifiable to Comcare but occurs in the workplace, contractors are required to notify DHA within 24 hours of the incident occurring. Workers are required to notify DHA of all WHS incidents and follow all reasonable instruction given by DHA. This guideline outlines the minimum requirements that apply when notifying DHA of a WHS incident.

### 4.1 What to report to DHA?

#### WHS incidents

A WHS incident is an event or occurrence arising from the PCBU's business or undertaking that results in:

- an injury and/or illness, or
- property damage, or
- a near miss.

A near miss is an event or occurrence that did not result in injury, illness or damage but had the potential to do so.

# Work health and safety incident notification

## Notifiable incidents

A notifiable incident is an incident that results in:

- the death of a person, or
- the serious injury or illness of a person, or
- a dangerous incident.

Section 36 and 37 of the WHS Act provide defines “serious injury or illness” and “dangerous incident” (refer to page 6 of this Guideline).

## Initial incident information

Below is an example of the type of information that you will need to report:

- incident date, time
- location (site address and exact location on the site where the incident occurred)
- details of injuries, severity and medical treatment (applied or intended)
- site preservation (if notifiable to Comcare)
- information relating to attendees and witnesses
- remedial action taken to prevent escalation or reoccurrence
- details of initial findings/investigation (if applicable).

This information is to be provided to DHA using DHA's contractor incident form (further information will be requested by DHA as required).

## 4.2 How and when to notify?

All incidents that occur at DHA workplaces are reportable to DHA. How and who to report to is dependent on the severity of the incident.

Notifiable incidents must be notified immediately to:

- DHA's WHS Team on (02) 6270 6082 or 139 342 (option 3).

All other WHS incidents must be notified to DHA within 24 hours of the incident occurring through either:

- phone 139 342 (option 3), or
- email [whs@dha.gov.au](mailto:whs@dha.gov.au)

## 4.3 Why report WHS incidents?

DHA has a legal obligation to notify Comcare of all notifiable incidents immediately after becoming aware that such an incident has occurred. Contractors are required to notify their respective State/Territory WHS regulator of the incident. Timely reporting of incidents to the WHS Team will assist DHA to comply with regulatory reporting timeframes and workplace safety.

The reporting of incidents provides an opportunity to assess the risks, identify hazards and ensure there are controls in place to effectively manage risks/hazards to prevent further incidents. Reporting also helps to identify improvements in the health, safety and wellbeing of DHA's workers.

## 5. Further assistance

For assistance or further information from a DHA WHS representative, please contact the WHS Team on 139 342 (option 3) or email [whs@dha.gov.au](mailto:whs@dha.gov.au).

## Appendix A

The WHS Act provides definitions of “serious injury or illness” in section 36 and “dangerous incidents” in section 37.

**Section 36:** Serious injury or illness of a person means an injury or illness requiring the person to have:

- a. immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital; or
- b. immediate treatment for
  - i. the amputation of any part of his or her body; or
  - ii. a serious head injury; or
  - iii. a serious eye injury; or
  - iv. a serious burn; or
  - v. the separation of his or her skin from an underlying tissue (such as degloving or scalping); or
  - vi. a spinal injury; or
  - vii. the loss of a bodily function; or
  - viii. serious lacerations; or
- c. medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance; and includes any other injury or illness prescribed by the regulations but does not include an illness or injury of a prescribed kind.

**Regulation 699:** For the purposes of section 36 of the Act, each of the following conditions is a serious illness:

- a. any infection to which the carrying out of work is a significant contributing factor, including any infection that is reliably attributable to carrying out work:
  - i. with micro-organisms; or
  - ii. that involves providing treatment or care to a person; or
  - iii. that involves contact with human blood or body substances; or
  - iv. that involves handling or contact with animals, animal hides, skins, wool or hair, animal carcasses or animal waste products;
- b. the following occupational zoonoses contracted in the course of work involving handling or contact with animals, animal hides, skins, wool or hair, animal carcasses or animal waste products:
  - i. Q fever;
  - ii. Anthrax;
  - iii. Leptospirosis;
  - iv. Brucellosis;
  - v. Hendra Virus;
  - vi. Avian Influenza;
  - vii. Psittacosis

**Section 37:** A Dangerous incident means an incident in relation to a workplace that exposes a worker or any other person to a serious risk to a person's health or safety emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to:

- a. an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance; or
- b. an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire; or
- c. an uncontrolled escape of gas or steam; or
- d. an uncontrolled escape of a pressurised substance; or
- e. electric shock; or
- f. the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing; or
- g. the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant that is required to be authorised for use in accordance with the regulations; or

# Work health and safety incident notification

- h. the collapse or partial collapse of a structure; or
- i. the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation; or
- j. the inrush of water, mud or gas in workings, in an underground excavation or tunnel; or
- k. the interruption of the main system of ventilation in an underground excavation or tunnel; or
- l. any other event prescribed by the regulations; but does not include an incident of a prescribed kind.