

# Incident and Hazard Reporting and Investigation Procedure



## 1 Purpose

To ensure all personnel involved with, or affected by, University operations are aware of the reporting and investigation requirements for incidents and hazards.

## 2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all Employees, Students, Workers, contractors, Visitors and members of the public while they are at the University or a University Workplace.

In special circumstances an investigation by an independent investigator may be warranted and will be directed by the Vice-Chancellor. This Procedure does not apply to an independent investigation as specific terms of reference will accompany the appointment of the investigator.

## 3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure provides for the timely reporting of all safety related incidents and hazards. Most of these incidents and hazards will require investigation by the University Safety team, a Supervisor, or in the more serious cases, by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) or other state regulator.

## 4 Procedures

### 4.1 Reportable Incidents and Hazards

#### 4.1.1 Reportable Incident (to the University)

A Reportable Incident to the University includes any Notifiable Incident, and in addition:

- any injury, illness, damage to equipment, plant or vehicles that has impacted, or has the potential to impact in different circumstances, the safety of personnel involved with the University's business or undertaking.

#### 4.1.2 Reportable Hazard (to the University)

A Reportable Hazard to the University includes:

- Any item of plant, any activity, any Procedure or any incident which has caused, or has the potential to cause injury to people or damage to property, and it cannot be immediately rectified.
- Any 'near miss' incident that, although it did not result in an injury or disease, had the potential to do so.

## 4.2 Notifiable and Dangerous Incidents

### 4.2.1 Notifiable Incident (to WHSQ or other state regulator)

An incident is notifiable if it arises out of the conduct of a business or undertaking and results in the death, serious injury or serious illness of a person, or involves a Dangerous Incident.

#### 4.2.1.1 *Serious injury or illness*

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) sets out that a serious injury or illness of a person is an injury or illness requiring the person to have:

- immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital
- immediate treatment for:
  - the amputation of any part of his or her body
  - a serious head injury
  - a serious eye injury
  - a serious burn
  - the separation of his or her skin from an underlying tissue (such as degloving or scalping)
  - a spinal injury
  - the loss of a bodily function
  - serious lacerations

or medical treatment (treatment by a doctor) within 48 hours of exposure to a substance. It is also:

- 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

- with micro-organisms; or
  - that involves providing treatment or care to a person; or
  - that involves contact with human blood or body substances; or
  - that involves handling or contact with Animals, Animal hides, skins, wool or hair, Animal carcasses or Animal waste products;
- the following occupational diseases contracted in the course of work involving the handling of, or contact with, Animals, Animal hides, skins, wool or hair, Animal carcasses or Animal waste products:
    - Q fever
    - Anthrax
    - Leptospirosis
    - Brucellosis
    - Hendra virus
    - Avian influenza
    - Psittacosis.

#### **4.2.1.2 Dangerous Incident**

A Dangerous Incident is 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:

- an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance
- an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire
- an uncontrolled escape of gas or steam
- an uncontrolled escape of a pressurised substance
- electric shock
- the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing

- 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
- the collapse or partial collapse of a structure
- the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation
- the inrush 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.

## **4.3 Reporting an incident or hazard**

### **4.3.1 Notification of an incident**

All incidents and hazards that meet the requirements of the definitions for Reportable Incidents, Reportable Hazards and Notifiable Incidents must be reported to the appropriate level of authority depending on the following individual requirements, and as outlined in Table 1 Investigation and reporting summary:

#### **4.3.1.1 Reportable Incidents**

Individuals at the University must report all personal incidents or injuries via the University Hazard and Incident Reporting and Tracking System (UniHIRTS) on the University's website.

#### **4.3.1.2 Reportable Hazards**

Individuals have an obligation to eliminate, guard against or protect others from any hazards as soon as they are recognised. If the hazards cannot be rectified immediately, the person must report the hazards to their Supervisor, and report via the University Hazard and Incident Reporting and Tracking System (UniHIRTS) on the University's website.

If there is imminent danger, the person recognising the danger must:

- take steps to isolate the danger by closing doors, evacuating the area;
- restrict entry;
- call the emergency number on extension 2222; and
- advise the Building Warden and appropriate Category 4 Delegate or above.

#### **4.3.1.3 Notifiable Incidents**

Notifiable to WHSQ Incidents or potentially Notifiable Incidents need to be reported to the University Safety team immediately for a determination on whether the incident is notifiable. If the University Safety team personnel determine the incident is notifiable, they will make the notification to WHSQ.

Notifiable Incident sites must not be disturbed until a WHSQ inspector arrives at the site or directs otherwise (whichever is earlier). A Notifiable Incident site may only be disturbed to:

- assist an injured person;
- remove a deceased person;
- make the site safe or to minimise the risk of a further Notifiable Incident;
- facilitate a police investigation; or
- an inspector has given a direction to do so either in person or by telephone.

Notifiable Incidents must also be reported on UniHIRTS. The University Safety team will provide guidance on the level of detail required in the initial report to UniHIRTS as this will usually be minimal until direction is received from the WHSQ or other state regulator.

## 4.4 Deciding on the level of investigation

This section provides Information on the Decision process for investigating a University safety matter. For investigation purposes, safety incidents are categorised as:

- Notifiable to WHSQ;
- detailed investigation by the University;
- short investigation by the University;
- Supervisor investigation; or
- do not contribute to safety and do not need to be recorded.

**Table 1: Investigation and reporting summary**

Type of Occurrence	Where to Report	When to Report	Who Will Investigate
Reportable Incident (to the University)	Supervisor	As soon as practicable	The University Safety team or Supervisor

	UniHIRTS		
Reportable Hazard (to the University)	Supervisor UniHIRTS	As soon as practicable	The University Safety team or Supervisor
Notifiable Incident (to WHSQ)	WHSQ Safety and Wellbeing UniHIRTS	Immediately (contact Safety and Wellbeing and they will make the notification)	Possibly by WHSQ (if not WHSQ then the University Safety team)

#### 4.4.1 Background

Commonwealth and State Work Health and Safety Regulators determine if they are going to investigate Notifiable Incidents and advise the University accordingly. They may choose to:

- investigate;
- delay their investigation;
- direct the University to investigate and forward the report to the regulator;
- direct the University to investigate and make the report available if requested at a future date; or
- allow the University to follow its own reporting and investigation Procedures.

If the Regulator directs the University to investigate the incident, a Decision is made on the level of investigation and the Decision process is the same whether it is a Notifiable Incident, Reportable Incident or Reportable Hazard.

Some occurrences may be subject to a 'detailed investigation', some to a 'minor or short investigation' and yet others may only require a Supervisor level investigation, as outlined in the Safety Investigation Reporting Schedule.

Other occurrences may be reported on UniHIRTS or to a Supervisor but on initial investigation it may be determined they do not contribute to safety and do not need to be investigated. These occurrences, once entered on UniHIRTS, will remain in the database to ensure system integrity and may be used for analysis and record keeping purposes.

#### 4.4.2 Priorities for investigating

The University's primary focus is on enhancing safety and in particular, those safety matters (including systemic matters) that may present a significant threat to the safety of Employees,

Students, contractors, Workers, Visitors and members of the public. The University will direct appropriate attention to identifying systemic factors that have the potential to result in catastrophic accidents.

In circumstances where the contributing factors are similar and the safety issues are well known, the likely safety benefits and lessons may not always justify allocating significant resources. In those cases, the University may undertake a limited fact-gathering investigation and report the details on UniHIRTS only. An example of a repetitive incident might be where an individual has slipped on stairs causing a serious personal injury. The level of injury might normally require a more detailed investigation but, due to the repetitive nature and well known contributing factors (fail to use handrails etc), the investigation and report may be quite short.

Equally, there is often as much or more to be learned from less Serious Incidents, patterns of incidents and 'near misses' as there is from serious or catastrophic incidents, and where appropriate, the University will give priority to these sorts of investigations.

#### **4.4.3 Factors that may affect the level of investigation**

The level of investigation is determined by resource availability and such factors as detailed below. These factors are presented in no particular order and may, depending on the circumstances, vary in the degree to which they influence the University's Decision to investigate and the level of response:

- anticipated safety value of an investigation, including the likelihood of furthering the understanding of the scope and impact of any safety system failures
- likelihood of safety action arising from the investigation, particularly of enterprise wide significance
- existence and extent of fatalities/serious injuries and/or structural damage to University plant/other infrastructure
- obligations or recommendations under legislation
- nature and extent of public interest, in particular the potential impact on public confidence in the safety of the University
- existence of supporting evidence or requirements to conduct a detailed investigation based on trends
- relevance to an identified and targeted safety program
- the extent of resources available and projected to be available in the event of conflicting priorities
- the risks associated with not investigating including consideration of whether, in the absence of a University investigation, a credible safety investigation by another party is

likely

- timeliness of notification
- training benefit for University investigators.

#### **4.4.4 Initiation of an investigation**

When an occurrence has been classified (usually by the University Safety team in accordance with this Procedure and in consultation with the Chief People Officer), an investigation will be initiated as follows:

- A detailed investigation can only be authorised by the Chief People Officer in consultation with the the University Safety team and other key stakeholders.
- Short investigations can be initiated by the University Safety team or may be directed by the Chief People Officer.
- Supervisor investigations are initiated when the initial notification is made on UniHIRTS or directly to a Supervisor. Supervisor investigations may also be directed by the Chief People Officer or the University Safety team.

#### **4.4.5 Trend monitoring**

Occurrences that may fit the definition of a safety incident but that in isolation do not represent a risk to safety, do not require individual investigation other than the investigation required on UniHIRTS.

Such occurrences may be referenced during trend monitoring of occurrences with similar factors and are entered into UniHIRTS for this purpose.

### **4.5 Minimum investigation requirements for Supervisor investigations on UniHIRTS**

Supervisors are required to ensure all areas of the report are completed on UniHIRTS and particular attention is required in the 'Supervisor Comments' area. When investigation and writing Supervisor comments the Supervisor must consider and report on:

- the factors that contributed to the occurrence including:
  - individual actions
  - failed or absent defences such as PPE, fail to hold handrail, etc.



- environmental factors
- systemic issues;
- actions required to prevent a recurrence; and
- recommendations for actions on a wider basis such as faculty, division or whole of University.

## 5 References

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*, Part 3, Section 36.

## 6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

## 7 Procedure Information

<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Executive Director (Facilities Management)
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Executive Director (Facilities Management)
<b>Policy Type</b>	University Procedure
<b>Policy Suite</b>	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety Policy</a>
<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	<a href="#">Safety Investigation Reporting Schedule</a>
<b>Approved Date</b>	7/6/2021
<b>Effective Date</b>	7/6/2021
<b>Review Date</b>	3/4/2022
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)</a>
<b>Related Policies</b>	
<b>Related Procedures</b>	<a href="#">Rehabilitation and Workers' Compensation Procedure</a> <a href="#">Work Health and Safety Management System Procedure</a>
<b>Related forms,</b>	<a href="#">Laboratory Safety Manual</a>

<p><b>publications and websites</b></p>	<p><a href="#">University Hazard and Incident Reporting and Tracking System (UniHIRTS)</a></p> <p><a href="#">WorkCover and rehabilitation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Work Health and Safety Manual</a></p>
<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	<p><b>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</b></p> <p><a href="#">Decision</a></p> <p>A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University.</p> <p><a href="#">Delegate (noun)</a></p> <p>Delegate (noun) means the officer, Employee or committee of the University to whom, or to which, a delegation of authority has been made under this Policy.</p> <p><a href="#">Employee</a></p> <p>A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the USQ Enterprise Agreement and includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University.</p> <p><a href="#">Information</a></p> <p>Any collection of data that is processed, analysed, interpreted, organised, classified or communicated in order to serve a useful purpose, present facts or represent knowledge in any medium or form. This includes presentation in electronic (digital), print, audio, video, image, graphical, cartographic, physical sample, textual or numerical form.</p> <p><a href="#">Procedure</a></p> <p>An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy.</p> <p><a href="#">Student</a></p> <p>A person who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been</p>

cancelled.

### [University](#)

The term 'University' or 'USQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.

## **Definitions that relate to this procedure only**

### **Contractor**

An entity or individual who contracts to perform work for another person or organisation, but is not employed by that person or organisation.

### **Dangerous Incident**

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:

- an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance
- an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire
- an uncontrolled escape of gas or steam
- an uncontrolled escape of a pressurised substance
- electric shock
- the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing
- 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
- the collapse or partial collapse of a structure
- the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation
- the inrush of water, mud or gas in workings, in an underground excavation or tunnel
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## **Notifiable Incident**

An incident is notifiable if it arises out of the conduct of a business or undertaking and results in the death, serious injury or serious illness of a person, or involves a Dangerous Incident.

## **Reportable Hazard**

- Any item of plant, any Procedure or any incident which has caused, or has the potential to cause, injury to people or damage to property, and it cannot be immediately rectified.
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## **Reportable Incident**

Any Notifiable Incident and in addition:

- any injury, illness, damage to equipment, plant or vehicles that has impacted, or has the potential to impact in different circumstances, the safety of personnel involved with the University's business or undertaking.

## **Serious Incident**

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) sets out that a serious injury or illness of a person is an injury or illness requiring the person to have:

- immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital
- immediate treatment for:
  - the amputation of any part of his or her body
  - a serious head injury
  - a serious eye injury
  - a serious burn
  - the separation of his or her skin from an underlying

tissue (such as degloving or scalping)

- a spinal injury
- the loss of a bodily function
- serious lacerations

or medical treatment (treatment by a doctor) within 48 hours of exposure to a substance. It is also:

- 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
  - with micro-organisms; or
  - that involves providing treatment or care to a person; or
  - that involves contact with human blood or body substances; or
  - that involves handling or contact with Animals, Animal hides, skins, wool or hair, Animal carcasses or Animal waste products
- the following occupational diseases contracted in the course of work involving the handling or contact with Animals, Animal hides, skins, wool or hair, Animal carcasses or Animal waste products:
  - Q fever
  - Anthrax
  - Leptospirosis
  - Brucellosis
  - Hendra virus
  - Avian influenza
  - Psittacosis.

## **Supervisor**

Any person responsible for leading the activities of others. In the context of this Procedure, a Supervisor includes Employees at any classification level or title who have responsibilities for leading, managing or supervising work teams and/or individual Employees.

## **Visitor**

Includes those volunteers, trainees, Researchers and other persons who are engaged in unpaid activities on a University Site or Workplace.

## **Workplace**

A place where work is carried out for the University and includes any place where a Worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work.

## **Worker**

A person who carries out work in any capacity for the University, including work as:

- an Employee; or
- a Contractor or subcontractor; or
- an Employee of a Contractor or subcontractor; or
- an Employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking; or
- an outworker; or
- an apprentice or trainee; or
- a Student gaining work experience; or
- a volunteer; or
- a person prescribed by legislation to have specific qualifications or experience or who conducts a specific prescribed class of work.

## **Keywords**

Incident, injury, investigation, hazard, reporting, workers' compensation, near miss

