


# Incident Reporting and Learning

An effective incident reporting system will help you to:

- Satisfy the Health and Safety at Work's requirement to notify WorkSafe of any serious injury, illness, or incident that happens to a person or people carrying out work, or as a result of work that your organisation is responsible for.
- Identify learning and safety improvement opportunities.
- Involve staff in supporting a proactive safety culture.

## What to report

 **Note!** Every incident (accidents and near misses) provides an opportunity for learning and should be reported.

Some incidents will need to be recorded, and some may also need to be reported externally.

Clear reporting triggers and thresholds will help your team know what they should report and how. Incidents that could have (near misses) or did result in injury, illness, or damage, should be reported to a supervisor or manager. With the help of clear guidance, they can then decide whether the incident needs to be recorded, and what further detail is required.

### Notifiable events


Some serious incidents are [notifiable events](#) and need to be reported to a regulator - WorkSafe NZ, Maritime NZ, or the Civil Aviation Authority.

Notifiable events include close calls that could have resulted in a death or notifiable illness or injury.

There are specific criteria for notifiable events, including requirements not to disturb the site where the event has occurred until authorised by an inspector, and advice on when it is OK to do so to ensure people's safety. For more information see the [WorkSafe](#) website.

All notifiable events related to the work being undertaken must be reported, including incidents involving participants. The same events aren't notifiable if they're unrelated to the work being undertaken, eg injuries triggered by a medical reason such as a fall due to a stroke.

Reporting a notifiable event to the regulator must be as soon as possible and by the fastest possible means.

 **Note!** If you doubt whether an event is notifiable, discuss this with WorkSafe as soon as possible.

### Reporting to your audit provider

Providers that are subject to the Adventure Activities Regulations are also required to report serious incidents to their audit provider. Talk with your audit provider and make sure you're clear on what they expect you to report.

*I want to prevent incidents and that means learning from near misses – there's nothing worse than hearing after an incident that some or all of our team 'saw that one coming'.*

## How to report

Note!

Incident reporting should be encouraged and seen as positive behaviour separate from whatever faults may have led to the incident.

Your reporting system should include:

- Simple processes that encourage people to report.
- A culture where everyone feels safe in reporting things that aren't right.
- Clearly defined thresholds, so that people know whether they should report, record, or not.
- Standardised reporting forms. You may choose to use different forms/methods for different incident severities.
- Clear responsibilities, eg who files the report, who receives it, and who follows up on it.
- Timeframes for when a report must be filed after an incident.
- Criteria, timeframes, and procedures for when a report must also be made to an external agency, eg WorkSafe, Maritime, or Civil Aviation Authority.

## Learning and following up

Note!

Every incident is an opportunity to learn.

A strong focus on gathering accurate information about and reviewing each incident should ensure that learning opportunities aren't missed.

The incident recording and review process should encourage those involved to:

- Detail what happened.
- Identify the likely and/or potential causes that contributed, or might have contributed, to the incident.
- Describe the causal sequence (the sequence of events that caused the incident).
- Identify what could be introduced or improved to prevent a similar incident from re-occurring.
- Make recommendations about follow-up actions to prevent re-occurrence.

You should also schedule regular incident reviews to look for trends across your incidents. This can give you valuable insight which could otherwise be missed. If possible, connect with other providers to share learning.

*When we set up our reporting system, no one used it. A whole lot of things have eventually made it work – simplicity, training, persistence – but possibly the most important has been our commitment to follow-up on each report. Even now though, we need to keep pushing and leading by example to keep the reports coming in.*

## Record keeping

Keeping records of your incident management processes is important.

Include:

- Copies of completed incident report forms and your accident register or summary if you use one.
- Action and learning points resulting from incident reviews, and details on when and how they were followed up.
- Keep records of notifiable events for at least five years from the date on which the regulator was notified.