

RISK INFORMATION – CHURCHES

INCIDENT REPORTING

All churches experience incidents which involve workers, congregation members and other users of church facilities. Incidents can result in death, injury, asset damage or near misses. This guidance explains why it is necessary to keep records of incidents and provides details of the sort of information that should be recorded. A sample incident reporting form is provided.

Why do we report incidents?

All organisations employing workers are required by legislation/regulation to keep registers of notifiable workplace incidents – this includes deaths, serious injuries and dangerous incidents or near misses even if no-one is injured. State based WHS/OHS resources should be referred to in order to understand the detailed requirements in this area. It is important to note that any notifiable event must be reported to the relevant authority immediately any person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) becomes aware it has happened.

Churches need to keep records of all incidents that might give rise to a future liability claim. The record should contain as much detail as possible (including photographs) to enable later understanding of the circumstances of the incident.

Churches should record near misses to identify hazards that may require application of new control measures.

Damage to property or assets should be recorded to identify the emergence of potential hazards and to facilitate repairs.

What sort of events / incidents should be reported?

Examples of events reported include:

- Death
- Serious injury
- Any incident requiring application of first aid
- Trips, slips, falls
- Robbery or violent incident
- Graffiti or other malicious property damage
- Structural fault
- Near miss in car park
- Natural disaster causing damage to property or people

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*Incident reporting **DOES NOT** include incidents or allegations of misconduct - for guidance in this area refer to your state based Professional Standards practitioner.*

What should be recorded on incident reports?

- Worker's name and job details (or third party person's name if not a worker)
- Time and date of injury or incident
- Exact location where the injury/incident occurred. Photographic evidence of the incident (after attending to injured persons) can be important evidence in any later liability claim
- How the incident/injury happened
- Details of the injury/illness and the part/s of the body injured
- Names of any witnesses
- Name the person entering details into the register
- Date the employer was notified
- Where applicable, the date and time the relevant regulator / insurer was informed
- Results of investigation into the causes of the incident
- Proposed controls to mitigate the hazard

A sample Incident Report Form is attached.

What do we do with reported incidents?

Your church will need to have a documented process for dealing with reported incidents which will include the following:

- Administration of first aid and emergency service (ambulance, fire, police), if needed.
- In the event of death or serious injury to a worker, the matter should be reported immediately to your state WorkSafe or SafeWork regulator. Where the injured party is not a worker you may still need to report to WorkSafe, e.g. awning collapses on customers.
- Notifying family members of the injured worker.
- Protect the incident scene until the relevant emergency services and/or government inspector arrives (or until notice is received that one will not be arriving) or until internal investigation is complete.
- Record incidents on Report forms and retain forms in a Register
- Report incidents through the Church management hierarchy and the Church governance (Board) body.
- Report worker injuries to your Workers' Compensation insurer.
- Notify Baptist Insurance Services if the incident might trigger a Liability claim.
- Analyse the circumstances of each incident to determine what changes might be required to existing control measures
- Change controls, repair assets

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- Retain reports of incidents and near misses in a register. For WHS/OHS incidents, records must be retained for a minimum of 5 years. For Liability claims or potential claims, records should be retained indefinitely.

INCIDENT/HAZARD REPORT FORM

Details of Person(s) involved in incident

Name

Address

Telephone No Date of Birth Gender

Student/Teacher/Contractor/Staff Member/Private Camper/ (fill in blank if other)

Incident Report documented by

Date Reported

Details of Incident

Time of Incident Date of Incident

Location of incident

Area/Activity that incident occurred

Description of incident (include drawings /photographs

Which body parts were affected by the incident? Provide details.

Witness Statements

Name/Address/Telephone no. of witness - Statement

Other factors pertinent to the incident?

Weather conditions at the time of the incident?

Equipment checked and found suitable? Has broken or damaged equipment been retained?

Has Personal Protection Equipment been checked? Was it suitable?

What instruction and training was given in relation to the activity?

INCIDENT/HAZARD REPORT FORM

What was the Root cause of the incident?

What corrective action was instigated, both immediately and ongoing in relation to the incident?

Was First Aid given and by whom was it given? Provide details and refer to First Aid Report

Was medical attention sought as a result of the incident? (Please provide details, if known)

Was there any damage to equipment and/or buildings/property due to the incident? If yes, have Maintenance/Safety representatives been informed to ensure the site is made safe and repairs carried out, if applicable?

Has the issue been escalated (where required)?

Is the incident a "Serious Event" notifiable to Worksafe?

If so, notified by Phone/Facsimile/Email? Date?

Guidelines in relation to use of this form

Site specific comments

Other details