



Injury reporting and investigation essentials for employers

WorkSafe Western Australia is the government agency responsible for regulating WA's occupational safety and health (OSH) legislation.

When incidents occur at workplaces, employers are required to report **forthwith** certain injuries and diseases to WorkSafe and investigate these injuries.

This fact sheet offers essential information to assist employers in meeting their obligations under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*.

What you need to know

1. Reporting injuries and diseases

How to report an injury or disease

Work related deaths and certain types of injuries and diseases must be reported forthwith to WorkSafe. Reporting is a legal requirement under OSH legislation.

Reporting must be done by the relevant employer(s) when an injury or disease occurs at a workplace or at certain employer provided accommodation (eg in regional areas).

Relevant employers include the self-employed, principal contractors and labour hire agents. In some cases, WorkSafe will require notification of the same reportable death, injury or disease by different 'relevant employers'.

Reporting of injuries and diseases can be done by completing an online form on WorkSafe's website: <https://wise.commerce.wa.gov.au/wise-noi/>

For reporting a workplace fatality or serious injury call the **Accident Notification Line** immediately on **1800 678 198**

Injuries and diseases that must be reported

Types of **injuries** that must be reported are:

- a fracture of the skull, spine or pelvis;
- a fracture of any bone in the arm (other than in the wrists or hand) or in the leg (other than a bone in the ankle or foot);
- an amputation of an arm, a hand, finger, finger joint, leg, foot, toe or toe joint;
- the loss of sight of an eye; and
- any injury other than the above which, in the opinion of a medical practitioner, is likely to prevent the employee from being able to work within 10 days of the day on which the injury occurred.

Types of **diseases** that must be reported are:

- infectious diseases: tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, Legionnaires' disease and HIV, where these diseases are contracted during work involving exposure to human blood products, body secretions, excretions or other material which may be a source of infection; and
- occupational zoonoses: Q fever, anthrax, leptospiroses and brucellosis, where these diseases are contracted during work involving the handling of, or contact with, animals, animal hides, skins, wool, hair, carcasses or animal waste products.

Further information and resources

Call the free **Enquiries Line on 1300 307 877** or go to www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/worksafe to access further information and resources.



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2. Investigating injuries

The *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* requires employers to investigate injuries within reasonable time, determine action (if any) and notify the employee who reported the injury of the outcome of the investigation.

The team approach to investigations

The main objective of an investigation is prevention. The way the investigation is carried out depends on the seriousness or complexity of the incident, but it is best done as a team so all parties can contribute their skills and knowledge.

Persons appointed by the employer to investigate an injury must base conclusions and recommendations on information and evidence collected during the investigation.

The following people should be considered for the team:

- manager/supervisor
- safety and health representative (if any);
- a safety person (if any); and
- employees or others with relevant knowledge.

Persons requested to carry out an injury investigation should be provided with relevant information and training.

The employer remains responsible for the investigation and the follow up actions.

Investigation procedures

Investigation procedures need to be systematic. For any investigation, the team should:

- act as soon as possible after the incident;
- for fatal or serious injuries call WorkSafe immediately on 1800 678 198;
- visit the scene before physical evidence is disturbed;
- not remove anything from the scene and enquire if anyone has moved anything; and
- not prejudge the situation.

After the initial investigation is complete, the team should:

- where relevant, identify, label and keep all evidence, for example, tools, defective equipment, fragments, chemical samples;
- interview witnesses separately;
- check to see if there have been any 'near misses' in similar circumstances;
- note down all sources of information;
- keep records to show that the investigation was conducted in a fair and impartial manner;
- review all potentially useful information, including design specifications, operating logs, purchasing records, previous reports, procedures, equipment manuals, job safety analysis reports, records of training and instruction of the people involved and experiences of people in similar workplaces/industries; and
- where relevant, reconstruct the incident (while ensuring that another incident does not occur) to assist in verifying facts, identifying what went wrong and what can be done to prevent it happening again.

What to look for

Look for causes, not blame. Systems fail for many reasons and the people involved are not always the cause of the incident.

Build a chain of events to identify all the causes. For the investigation to be successful it is necessary to establish the:

- events leading up to the accident;
- facts of the incident itself;
- facts regarding what occurred immediately after the incident;
- essential factors and causes; and
- conclusions and recommendations.

Need more information?

Further information about injury investigations are included in the publication **Tips for investigating accidents and incident** which can be found on WorkSafe's website:

www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/worksafe