Work Health and Safety Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) Charles Sturt University (the University) promotes reporting and investigating of all work health and safety incidents. This supports a safety culture where learning from errors is used to prevent a recurrence and to comply with legislation.

(2) This procedure requires staff to:

a. report incidents;
b. properly investigate all incidents;
c. take corrective action to prevent recurrence; and
d. reduce the work health and safety (WHS) risk at the University.

Scope

(3) This procedure applies to all faculties, divisions, offices and organisational units of the University and its controlled entities.

Section 2 - Glossary

(4) For the purpose of this procedure:

a. Critical incident – has the same meaning found in the Emergency Management Procedure;
b. Dangerous incident – means any incident in relation to a workplace that exposes any person to a serious risk resulting from an immediate or imminent exposure to:
    i. an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance;
    ii. an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire;
    iii. an uncontrolled escape of gas or steam;
    iv. an uncontrolled escape of a pressurised substance;
    v. electric shock, including minor shock resulting from direct contact with exposed live electrical parts (other than 'extra low voltage') including shock from capacitive discharge;
    vi. the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing;
    vii. the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant that is required to be design or item registered under the Work Health and Safety Regulations, for example a collapsing crane;
    viii. the collapse or partial collapse of a structure;
    ix. the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation;
    x. the inrush of water, mud or gas in workings, in an underground excavation or tunnel; or
    xi. the interruption of the main system of ventilation in an underground excavation or tunnel.
c. Immediate treatment - means the kind of urgent treatment that would be required for a serious injury or illness.

It includes treatment by a registered medical practitioner, a paramedic or registered nurse. Even if immediate treatment is not readily available, e.g. because the incident site is rural or remote or because the relevant specialist treatment is not available, notification must still be made;

d. Incident - means an unplanned event resulting in, or having the potential for injury, ill-health, damage or other loss. This includes injuries, accidents and near misses (including hazards);
e. Medical treatment - means treatment by a registered medical practitioner (a doctor);
f. Serious incident – means any of the following:
    i. the death of a person;
    ii. a serious injury or illness; or
    iii. a dangerous incident.
g. Serious injury or illness means - any of the following:
    i. immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital;
    ii. immediate treatment for:
        - the amputation of any part of the body;
        - a serious head injury;
        - a serious eye injury;
        - a serious burn;
        - the separation of skin from an underlying tissue (such as de-gloving or scalping);
        - a spinal injury;
        - the loss of a bodily function; or
        - for serious lacerations.
    iii. medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance;
    iv. any infection where the work is a significant contributing factor. This includes any infection related to carrying out work:
        - with micro-organisms;
        - that involves providing treatment or care to a person;
        - 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.
    v. The following zoonoses contracted during work involving animals, animal hides, skins, wool or hair, animal carcasses or animal waste products:
        - Q fever;
        - Anthrax;
        - Leptospirosis;
        - Brucellosis;
        - Hendra Virus;
        - Avian Influenza; or
        - Psittacosis.
h. WHS Unit - means the Work Health and Safety unit within the Division of People and Culture
i. Worker – has the same meaning found in the Work Health and Safety Policy;

Section 3 - Policy

(5) Refer to the Work Health and Safety Policy.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Responsibilities

Workers and students

(6) Workers and students involved in any incident are responsible for the following:

a. the actions listed under Part B - Preserving the incident site, when required;
b. reporting all incidents to your supervisor or manager; and
c. completion of the incident report within 24 hours.

First-aid officers and security officers

(7) First-aid officers and security officers involved in any incident are responsible for the following:

a. the actions listed under Part B - Preserving the incident site, when required;
b. ensuring that all incidents requiring first-aid or attended by a first aid officer or security officer are reported (see Part C of this procedure); and
c. ensuring completion of the incident report within 24 hours (see Part C of this procedure).

Supervisors

(8) In addition to the responsibilities of workers, supervisors whose workers or students are involved in any incident are responsible for the following:

a. preserving the incident site, when required (Part B of this procedure);
b. ensuring the completion of the incident report within 24 hours (see Part C of this procedure);
c. reporting all serious incidents immediately to the Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing (see Part C of this procedure); and
d. investigation of incidents (Part D of this procedure).

WHS Unit

(9) The WHS Unit are responsible for the following:

a. preserving the incident site, when required (Part B of this procedure);
b. reporting to SafeWork (see Part C of this procedure);
c. reporting to Workers Compensation Insurer (see Part C of this procedure);
d. assist supervisors in the investigation of serious incidents (see Part D of this procedure);
e. review incident and investigation reports (see Part D of this procedure); and
f. retention of records (see Part E of this procedure).

Head of School (HOS)/Head of Unit

(10) The Head of School (HOS)/Head of Unit is responsible for the following:

a. suspending work in any area where a serious incident has occurred and there is a risk of a similar incident occurring again. Work must not resume until the investigation has been completed and/or corrective action taken; and
b. reviewing incident and investigation reports for their school/unit (see Part D of this procedure).

Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing

(11) The Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing is responsible for suspending work in any area where a serious incident has occurred and there is a risk of a similar incident occurring again. Work must not resume until the investigation has been completed and/or corrective action taken.

Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG)

(12) The Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) is responsible for ensuring appropriate steps are taken to investigate and identify preventative action, where a critical incident has occurred.

Part B - Preserving the incident site

(13) When a serious incident occurs the following must be followed:

a. do only what is needed to make the site safe. For example, provide first aid, fight any fire, contain spills, electrical isolation, physical barriers, and contact emergency services;
b. preserve all evidence as it is, until SafeWork approves otherwise; and
c. suspend work in any area where a serious incident has occurred and there is a risk of a similar incident occurring again. Work must not resume until the investigation has been completed and/or corrective action taken.

(14) For all other incidents:

a. take appropriate immediate action to minimise the risk of further injury or damage, if it is safe to do so. This is to be done before reporting the incident. For example, provide first aid, fight any fire, contain spills, electrical isolation, physical barriers, and contact emergency services;
b. preserve all evidence as it is, where possible, until the WHS Unit approves otherwise; and
c. photograph any evidence which needs to be moved, prior to moving it.

Part C - Reporting

(15) Report all incidents to your supervisor or manager.

(16) Report all serious incidents immediately to the Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing.

(17) Report all other incidents within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

(18) Use the online Incident and Hazard Reporting System to report all incidents. If the online incident reporting system is not functioning, the WHS Incident Report and Investigation Form (Appendix A) must be completed and sent to the WHS Unit.

(19) Refer to the site emergency plans for additional reporting requirements, where incidents constitute an emergency.

(20) Incidents involving drones must be reported in accordance with the University Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Operations Manual which can be obtained from the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

(21) Incidents involving motor vehicle accidents, where damage is significant, must also be reported to the local police.

Reporting to SafeWork

(22) The WHS Unit must notify SafeWork NSW as soon as practicable, but within 48 hours, of any serious incident.

(23) The WHS Unit must notify SafeWork NSW even if the person injured or killed is not a University worker.

Reporting to Workers Compensation Insurer

(24) The WHS Unit must notify the Workers Compensation Insurer of all injuries or illnesses where workers compensation is payable. Notification must be within 48 hours of the incident occurring or of the University receiving notification.

Part D - Investigation of incidents

(25) Investigations must be completed within one week of being reported. Uninvestigated incidents will be reported to Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) and other relevant compliance committees.

(26) Gain an understanding of what happened by:

a. visiting the incident site. It may also be appropriate to take measurements such as light levels and distances;
b. talking to the injured person, witnesses and experts; and
c. reviewing documents and records related to the activity involved in the incident. These might include risk assessments, safe work procedures (SWPs), training records etc).

(27) Identify the contributing factors and hazards which caused the incident.

(28) Decide on suitable corrective actions. These must be consistent with the hierarchy of controls (see Work Health and Safety Risk Management Procedure).

(29) Discuss and agree on actions with the person(s) who will be responsible for them.

(30) Record the investigation and corrective actions in the online Incident and Hazard Reporting System.

(31) Incidents involving drones must be investigated in accordance with the University Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Operations Manual which can be obtained from the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Review incident and investigation reports

(32) Review all incident investigations and corrective actions for suitable completion. If needed, request additional investigation and/or add/change corrective actions.

Part E - Retention of records

(33) Incident records must be maintained for a minimum of 75 years. Where a new incident management software is introduced, incident records must be migrated to the new system.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(34) Nil.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	16th September 2019
Review Date	1st July 2023
Approval Authority	Executive Director, Human Resources
Approval Date	21st August 2019
Expiry Date	19th December 2023
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