

Purpose/Objectives

This document provides additional information relating to the Incident Recording and Investigation Procedure to assist employees to categorise the severity of incidents and hazards, which in turn affects how the incident or hazard is managed.

Scope/Application

'This Guideline applies across the University'.

Guidelines

When categorising incidents and hazards in relation to health and safety decisions will take into account a number of factors:

- the actual and potential impact to those involved in or witnessing the incident
- the actual and potential impact to the organization
- degree of the direct and indirect impact to individuals and the organization
- level of emotional, physical and financial support which will be required to recover from the incident
- time and resources required to eliminate or minimize the risk of similar incidents.

Safety Incident Severity Rating Examples

Table 1 Biological Incident or Hazard

| Rating | Description | Example – Biological Incident |
|---------------|---|--|
| Insignificant | First aid | Clean sharps causing needle stick or a spill within a biosafety cabinet |
| Minor | Incident causing harm which can be instantly addressed through first aid but needs referral for further treatment | Exposure to a risk group 1 agent |
| Moderate | Incident causing harm which requires ambulance and/ or medical treatment and ongoing care. | Exposure to group 2 agent as it may require vaccination or other treatment to prevent or reverse the effects |
| Major | Permanent disability, severe long term injury | Exposure to risk group 3 agent |
| Catastrophic | One or more deaths | Exposure to risk group 4 agents which may cause an incurable disease or virus any incident which requires notification to the Dept. of Health and WorkSafe |

Table 2 Psychological Incident or Hazard

| Rating | Description | Example – Psychological Incident |
|---------------|---|--|
| Insignificant | First aid | Shock or stress |
| Minor | Incident causing harm which can be instantly addressed through first aid but needs referral for further treatment | Distress which requires on-site incident debriefing or mediation |
| Moderate | Incident causing harm which requires ambulance and/ or medical treatment and ongoing care. | Distress which requires EAP or other counselling or time away from the workplace to deal with illness using personal leave |

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| Major | Permanent disability, severe long term injury | Long term distress which results in a WorkCover claim, suicidal or physical harm and/or long term professional intervention |
| Catastrophic | One or more deaths | Suicide, psychotic attack on others |

Table 3 Chemical use or Storage Incident or Hazard

| Rating | Description | Example – Chemical Use or Storage Incident |
|---------------|---|--|
| Insignificant | First aid | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemical exposure of low toxic substance requiring use of eye wash station or deluge shower or other First Aid assistance 2. Storage of small quantities of expired or inadequately stored dangerous goods – non-volatile only, requiring disposal |
| Minor | Incident causing harm which can be instantly addressed through first aid but needs referral for further treatment | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemical exposure of I substance requiring use of eye wash station or deluge shower and referred for assessment. 2. Storage of small quantities of expired or inadequately stored dangerous goods – requiring immediate disposal |
| Moderate | Incident causing harm which requires ambulance and/ or medical treatment and ongoing care. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uncontrolled chemical exposure requiring ambulance or medical assessment whether or not admitted to hospital 2. Storage of volatile dangerous goods or highly toxic substances without adequate controls |
| Major | Permanent disability, severe long term injury | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explosion, fire or other uncontrolled chemical reaction which causes chemical burns or poisoning requiring long term care, including permanent scarring or impairment of any of the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch) |
| Catastrophic | One or more deaths | Exposure to toxic or radioactive substance or impact from explosion or fire |

Table 4 Plant and Equipment Incident or Hazard

| Rating | Description | Example – Plant & Equipment Incident |
|---------------|---|---|
| Insignificant | First aid | Low level burn, scratch or bruise to an individual directly involved in a task e.g. dropped a screwdriver from waist height onto foot causing bruising to top of foot |
| Minor | Incident causing harm which can be instantly addressed through first aid but needs referral for further treatment | Hand caught in equipment but laceration not requiring stitches. Complaints of muscular pain resolved following ergonomic assessment. |
| Moderate | Incident causing harm which requires ambulance and/ or medical treatment and ongoing care. | Burns, cuts or contusions when caught in machine requiring ongoing treatment. Motor vehicle incident where injury requires physiotherapy. |
| Major | Permanent disability, severe long term injury | Any injury which requires surgery, leaves permanent impairment of any of the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch) including amputations or de-gloving |

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| Catastrophic | One or more deaths | Entanglement or crushing in large plant, electrocution |
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Table 5 Manual Handling and Slip, Trip and Fall Incident or Hazard

| Rating | Description | Example – Manual Handling / Slip, Trip or Fall Incident |
|---------------|---|--|
| Insignificant | First aid | Fall resulting in bruise or graze requiring first aid. Failure of a control without injury e.g. collapse of a trolley, hand rail or shelf |
| Minor | Incident causing harm which can be instantly addressed through first aid but needs referral for further treatment | Muscle strain or sprain that requires more than first aid such as physiotherapy. Laceration treated by first aider but referred to local doctor. |
| Moderate | Incident causing harm which requires ambulance and/ or medical treatment and ongoing care. | Fall to ground causing broken bones, contusions or lacerations requiring medical assistance Muscle strain from high level exertion, awkward heavy strain or repetitive actions requiring medical intervention e.g. surgery, injected medication |
| Major | Permanent disability, severe long term injury | Any level of paralysis, broken neck or back, acquired brain injury |
| Catastrophic | One or more deaths | Fall from height or structure collapse |

Table 6 Sport related Incident or Hazard

| Rating | Description | Example – Sport related Incident |
|---------------|---|--|
| Insignificant | First aid | Bruise, muscle pulled or ankle rolled requires no more than ice and rest, cuts or scratches requiring First Aid |
| Minor | Incident causing harm which can be instantly addressed through first aid but needs referral for further treatment | Muscle strain or sprain that requires more than first aid such as physiotherapy |
| Moderate | Incident causing harm which requires ambulance and/ or medical treatment and ongoing care. | Fractured bones or torn tendons, knocked unconscious, laceration, blood loss, injuries to internal organs, or any injury requiring monitoring as either an in-patient or out-patient at hospital or medical centre |
| Major | Permanent disability, severe long term injury | Any level of paralysis, trauma to head, neck or back, acquired brain injury or near drowning |
| Catastrophic | One or more deaths | Drowning, severe head trauma |

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