

# Health and Safety - OHS Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

- (1) Ensure Victoria University gathers accurate and timely data on incidents, hazards and dangerous occurrences which have caused injury or illness to any person, or had the potential to cause injury or illness to any person on any University site and in relation to activities under the control and management of the University.
- (2) Provide instruction on communication regarding OHS incidents at the University.
- (3) Provide practical instruction on when and how the investigation of incidents will be conducted.
- (4) Provide information on notification of serious incidents to both senior leaders and WorkSafe when required.

## Section 2 - Scope / Application

- (5) This procedure applies across the University and to all University employees.

## Section 3 - Definitions

- (6) Nil

## Section 4 - Policy Statement

- (7) Nil

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibility
Everyone working at VU	Take care to avoid injury or illness and to maintain safe work environments. Take immediate steps to minimise further injury or illness to others once a hazard has been identified or incident has taken place. Notify verbally the appropriate manager of an area where a hazard or incident has been experienced or witnessed. Notify in writing, using the VU OHS Incident Recording System provided, of any hazard with potential to, or incident which has, caused injury, illness or damage to the work environment. Implement changes as instructed to improve health and safety at VU.
Executives and Leaders	Encourage the reporting of OHS hazards and incidents to build high quality data. Include OHS Incident Investigation reports on OHS Committee agendas. Endorse and monitor the recommendations from OHS Incident Investigation reports and ensure recommendations are allocated reasonable resources for implementation.

Roles	Responsibility
Managers and Supervisors	Initiate and participate directly in OHS incident response immediately after the incident occurs. Communicate with the OHS Team, senior leaders and any other stakeholders as soon as possible after a serious incident occurs. Contact the OHS Team for advice while assessing the requirement for an investigation and notification to WorkSafe and where necessary notify WorkSafe of serious incidents. Ensure incident sites are preserved for investigation where possible. Participate in incident investigations including contribute to reports on incidents within their direct group. Ensure Health and Safety Representatives are made available for consultation on incident investigation recommendations. Implement actions recommended in the investigation report as required.
Teachers, Academic Staff and Researchers	Provide immediate response directly after the incident occurs where it involves students or staff with which they are directly involved at the time. Communicate with managers, the OHS Team and any other stakeholders to ensure timely management of the incident. Cooperate and, when requested, participate in OHS Incident Investigations. Provide copies of class plans and other activity planning documents including risk assessments, as requested, to support the investigation. Implement actions recommended in the investigation report as required.
OHS Team	Provide advice on incident management, WorkSafe notifications and incident investigations. Provide advice and gather evidence, conduct interviews and consult on recommended actions during incident response and investigation. Assist with the preparation and circulation of incident reports taking into account the content of the reports and privacy and other legal limitations. Ensure wider distribution of any information which may impact on other parts of VU business, issue alerts and improve procedures where necessary. Provide statistical data and executive reports on incidents and incident investigations to OHS Committees and the Senior Leadership Team. Monitor the implementation of actions recommended in investigation reports as required.

## Part B - General

(8) This procedure describes how Victoria University records, communicates and investigates incidents, hazards and dangerous occurrences at University sites or to University staff, students and others affected by the University's activities.

(9) At Victoria University a culture of thorough recording and investigation of incidents, to establish the actual or potential impact on individuals and the organisation, is strongly encouraged. The emphasis during recording, follow up and investigation of incidents will be on learning from the facts, which will improve safety and prevent future incidents.

(10) Incident reporting and investigation are essential to achieve a healthy and safe work, learning and research environment for all staff, students, contractors and visitors at Victoria University. Comprehensive incident recording, investigation and reporting are fundamental to ensuring that adequate preventive action is taken following an incident. Health and safety hazard and incident data is critical for informed decision-making regarding the allocation of resources for prevention programs. Additionally, accurate data allows VU to monitor the risk prevention programs by analysing short and long-term trends.

(11) The Victoria University Incident Recording System has been developed to collect data and provide critical information on the nature and the extent of occupational injury in the workplace.

### Incident or Hazard Response

(12) An incident is an event that results in or has the potential to result in harm or damage. This procedure is to be followed in response to all injuries, near misses and exposure to hazards which pose a threat to persons, the environment or property of any type including plant and equipment.

(13) In the event of an emergency, follow the University Emergency Procedures.

(14) All employees must take immediate action(s) to minimise safety risks to persons, plant, equipment or the environment. This may include but is not limited to:

- a. Obtaining first aid treatment or other assistance for any injuries;
- b. Stopping work or other activities that are associated with the incident or hazard; and
- c. Assessing the site and making it safe as far as practical or limiting exposure by withdrawing from the site.

(15) Where any incident has caused serious injury to a person or posed a serious threat, the site must be preserved without disturbance as far as possible, to enable a thorough investigation to be carried out.

### **Internal Communication**

(16) All health and safety incidents must be reported both verbally to an appropriate manager and through the online Hazard/ Incident Reporting System as soon as possible. When the incident is considered serious, the notification is required immediately in person or by telephone to the appropriate manager, the OHS Team, and the College Dean or the organisational unit Executive followed by a written report in the Incident Recording System.

(17) An incident / hazard report can be made by any person involved in the incident or witnessing the incident or hazard, or by a third party if requested by any person involved in the incident or who witnessed the incident or hazard. The person making the report on the Hazard/ Incident Reporting System is required to be an employee of the University so students and others should request an employee complete the online report on their behalf.

(18) Managers, Deans and Executives are required to inform a member of the Health and Safety team as well as relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team of all serious incidents particularly those that may require notification to WorkSafe, and/or an affected third party employer or business partner.

### **External Communication**

(19) Where the incident is required to be notified to WorkSafe contact must be made immediately with a member of the OHS Team for advice and support before telephoning WorkSafe on 132 360. WorkSafe may require their specific incident notification form to be completed and lodged within 48 hours, incidents which must be notified to WorkSafe are defined with the WorkSafe Guide to Incident Notification.

(20) Managers, Deans and Executives should reach an agreement on who will contact any third parties who may include the parents or guardians of students, family of staff members, employers of apprentices or other stakeholders who may be impacted by the incident.

### **Investigations**

(21) The manager will make an initial assessment of the severity of the hazard or incident using the severity rating provided on the Health and Safety Risk Severity Guide (located under 'Risk management and assessment').

(22) The OHS Team have the authority to reassess the severity of an incident or hazard at any time. Both the manager and OHS Team member will take into account the actual or potential impact on individuals and the organisation of the incident or hazard as well as any wider repercussions including but not limited to:

- a. WorkCover claim either against the University or a third party employer (e.g. employer of an apprentice, contractor or visiting academic);
- b. Financial implications of property or environmental damage;
- c. Damage to relationships with the community, businesses, other universities and individual or groups of students; and
- d. University reputational standing.

(23) Major or high risk investigations and/or where the consequence is moderate or worse, will be led by a member of the OHS Team in accordance with the OHS Team Investigation guidance and report form. Investigations should commence within 1 business day of the incident or occurrence and be completed as soon as possible following the

process provided on the guidance and report form.

(24) If the incident is classified as notifiable to Worksafe then the investigation will be led by a member of the OHS Team.

(25) An insignificant or minor consequence incident, hazard or near miss will be investigated by the manager and a report entered into the OHS Hazard/Incident Reporting System within 7 days. Assistance can be sought from the OHS Team.

(26) It is important for all investigation teams to look for underlying causes and not simply immediate causes. Corrective actions should be considered and implemented.

## **Section 6 - Guidelines**

(27) Nil

## Status and Details

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