


Incident Reporting for Support Workers



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Comprehensive Guide: Incident Reporting for Support Workers

◇ 1. What is an Incident Report?

An **incident report** is a written record of any event that:

- Causes **harm, injury, or distress** to a participant, staff member, or others.
- Places someone at **risk of harm**.
- Is a **reportable incident** under the NDIS Commission rules.
- Involves **property damage, hazards, or near misses** that could affect safety.

Purpose:

- To ensure safety and wellbeing of participants.
 - To provide accurate information for follow-up, investigation, and prevention.
 - To meet **legal and NDIS compliance requirements**.
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◇ 2. When Must You Write an Incident Report?

You must write an incident report if ANY of the following occur:

A. Participant-Related

- **Injury or illness:** falls, cuts, fractures, burns, head injuries.
- **Death of a participant** (must be reported to the NDIS Commission within **24 hours**).
- **Serious injury requiring medical attention or hospitalisation.**
- **Abuse or neglect:** physical, sexual, emotional, financial.
- **Unlawful sexual or physical contact** or **sexual misconduct**.
- **Use of unauthorised restrictive practices** (physical, chemical, mechanical, environmental, or seclusion).
- **Behaviour incidents** causing harm or risk of harm.

✓ **B. Environmental/Property**

- Fire, flood, gas leak, or electrical hazard.
- Vehicle accident during transport.
- Property damage impacting participant safety (broken equipment, unsafe environment).

✓ **C. Workplace-Related**

- Support worker injury while providing care.
 - Aggression/violence towards staff or participants.
 - Medication errors (wrong dose, missed dose, overdose).
 - Near misses (e.g., participant almost falls but is caught).
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◇ 3. Reportable Incidents (NDIS Commission)

Support workers must report internally **immediately**, and organisations must notify the **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**.

Reportable Incidents include:

1. Death of a participant.
2. Serious injury.
3. Abuse or neglect.
4. Unlawful sexual or physical contact.
5. Sexual misconduct.
6. Unauthorised use of restrictive practices.

 **Timelines for NDIS notification:**

- **Within 24 hours** → Death, serious injury, abuse/neglect, unlawful contact, sexual misconduct.
 - **Within 5 business days** → Unauthorised restrictive practices.
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◇ 4. How to Write an Incident Report

Key Principles

- Write **factually, objectively, and clearly**.
- Do not use opinions, assumptions, or blame.
- Use plain language.
- Write **as soon as possible after the incident**.

What to Include:

1. Basic details

- Date, time, and location of incident.
- Names of people involved.
- Witnesses (if any).

2. Description of the incident

- What exactly happened (chronological order).
- What was observed (behaviours, injuries, environment).
- What led up to the incident (if known).

3. Immediate actions taken

- First aid given, medical help called, police notified.
- Actions to ensure participant safety.

4. Outcome

- Injury or damage details.
- Emotional impact.

5. Next steps / Follow-up

- Referral to supervisor, clinical review, counselling, risk management.

◇ 5. Examples of Incidents

Example 1 – Injury

- **Incident:** Participant slipped in the bathroom and hit their head.
- **Actions:** First aid applied, ambulance called, supervisor informed.
- **Report:** Written with details, timeline, and medical response.

Example 2 – Medication Error

- **Incident:** Participant given 2 tablets instead of 1.
- **Actions:** Supervisor informed, poison hotline called, participant monitored, GP contacted.
- **Report:** Includes error details, participant’s response, corrective action.

Example 3 – Abuse/Neglect

- **Incident:** Support worker overhears another staff member yelling and using threats towards a participant.
- **Actions:** Ensure participant is safe, notify supervisor immediately.
- **Report:** Document factual details (words used, tone, time, witnesses).

Example 4 – Unauthorised Restrictive Practice

- **Incident:** Staff member locks a participant in their room without authorisation.
- **Actions:** Ensure participant safety, notify supervisor, report internally.
- **Report:** Document action taken, context, and escalate as per policy.

◇ 6. Best Practices for Support Workers

- Always **report incidents promptly** – don’t delay.
- Stick to **facts only** (avoid “I think” or “probably”).
- Use **neutral, respectful language**.
- Ensure **participant dignity and privacy**.
- Submit reports to your **supervisor/manager** and follow organisational policy.
- Remember: **If in doubt, write a report.**

If you are in doubt, please call your line manager asap.

Disclaimer:

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