

Reportable Incidents Guide for Support Workers



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Reportable Incidents Guide for Support Workers

1. What is a Reportable Incident?

A **reportable incident** is any serious event that affects the safety, rights, or wellbeing of an NDIS participant.

Reportable incidents include:

1. **Death** of a participant
2. **Serious injury** (fractures, burns, head injuries, hospitalisation)
3. **Abuse or neglect** (physical, sexual, emotional, financial)
4. **Unlawful sexual or physical contact**
5. **Sexual misconduct**
6. **Unauthorised restrictive practices** (physical, chemical, mechanical, environmental, or seclusion used without authorisation or outside BSP conditions)

2. Types of Reportable Incidents (Explained Simply)

1. Death of a Participant

- Any time an NDIS participant passes away.
- Must be reported **within 24 hours** to the NDIS Commission.
- Includes expected (e.g., due to illness) and unexpected deaths — still reportable.

2. Serious Injury

A **serious injury** is any injury that:

- Requires **hospitalisation**, or
- Causes **long-term or significant harm**.

Examples:

- Fractures or broken bones

- Serious head injuries or loss of consciousness
 - Severe burns
 - Deep cuts requiring surgery
 - Injuries that make the person unable to function normally
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3. Abuse or Neglect

Any action or failure to act that harms a participant.

Abuse includes:

- **Physical:** Hitting, pushing, rough handling
- **Sexual:** Any unwanted sexual contact, harassment, or exploitation
- **Emotional/Psychological:** Bullying, yelling, threats, humiliation
- **Financial:** Stealing money, misusing participant's funds

Neglect includes:

- Failing to provide food, medication, supervision, or care
 - Ignoring health needs (e.g., not calling a doctor when clearly required)
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4. Unlawful Sexual or Physical Contact

- Any unwanted or illegal **touching or assault** against a participant.
 - Can be from another participant, a staff member, or anyone else.
 - Examples: hitting, slapping, sexual assault, groping.
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5. Sexual Misconduct

- Inappropriate sexual behaviour by a **staff member** towards a participant.
- Includes:
 - Sexual jokes or comments
 - Sexual harassment
 - Grooming

- Exploiting a participant for sexual activity
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6. Unauthorised Restrictive Practices

Restrictive practices are actions that **limit a participant's rights or freedom of movement**.

They are only legal if:

- They are written in the participant's **Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)**, and
- They are authorised by the **relevant state/territory authority**.

If they are used without this, they are **unauthorised**.

Types:

1. **Seclusion** – locking someone alone in a room or space they cannot leave.
 2. **Chemical restraint** – using medication to control behaviour (not for a medical condition).
 3. **Mechanical restraint** – using devices (belts, straps, cuffs, bed rails) to restrict movement.
 4. **Physical restraint** – staff holding or forcing someone's body to stop movement.
 5. **Environmental restraint** – restricting access to areas or objects (e.g., locking fridge, blocking exits).
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3. Why Reportable Incidents Matter

- Protects the **participant's rights and safety**
 - Ensures **timely investigation and corrective action**
 - Keeps providers compliant with the **NDIS Code of Conduct** and **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission)** regulations
 - Protects **you as a support worker** — reporting is mandatory and protected by law
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4. What Support Workers Must Do

Step 1: Ensure Immediate Safety

- Remove any immediate danger
- Provide first aid or call **000** if required
- Stay with the participant and reassure them

Step 2: Notify Supervisor / Manager

- Tell your **supervisor or line manager immediately**
- If the supervisor is involved, escalate to a higher manager or safeguarding officer

Step 3: Document Incident

Include:

- Date, time, and location
- What happened (facts only)
- Who was involved (staff, participants, witnesses)
- Actions taken
- Participant's immediate condition

5. Reporting Timelines

Incident Type	Notification Requirement	Timeline	Notes
Death	Immediate notification to NDIS Commission	Within 24 hours	Include participant details, cause (if known), circumstances
Serious injury	Immediate notification	Within 24 hours	Hospitalisation, fractures, severe burns, head injuries
Abuse / neglect	Immediate notification	Within 24 hours	Physical, sexual, emotional, financial, neglect

Incident Type	Notification Requirement	Timeline	Notes
Unlawful sexual or physical contact	Immediate notification	Within 24 hours	Between participants or staff
Sexual misconduct by worker	Immediate notification	Within 24 hours	Staff member’s misconduct, harassment, or exploitation
Unauthorised restrictive practices	Immediate if serious harm; otherwise 5-day report	24 hours for harm; 5 business days if no harm	Includes seclusion, chemical, mechanical, physical, or environmental restraint not authorised in BSP

Key Point: If unsure whether it’s reportable, **report it anyway** — supervisors and NDIS Commission will decide.

6. After Reporting

- Cooperate with **investigation**
- Provide witness statements if asked
- Continue to **monitor participant’s wellbeing**
- Update **Behaviour Support Plans** or care plans if needed

7. Tips for Support Workers

- Always **follow the participant’s support plan**
- Know the **authorised restrictive practices** (if any)
- **Never cover up incidents**
- Ask for training in **positive behaviour support and de-escalation**
- **Document facts only** — avoid opinions or assumptions

8. Quick Reference Checklist

- ✓ Participant safe and any immediate danger removed
- ✓ Supervisor/manager notified immediately
- ✓ Incident recorded with facts, witnesses, and actions
- ✓ Cooperating with follow-up and investigation

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

Disclaimer:

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