

# LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

## INCIDENT AND HAZARD REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

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### 1. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the University's incident reporting and recording requirements and the procedure for accident/incident investigation. The following procedure specifies who is responsible for reporting, recording and investigating of incidents, and the process to report hazards / incidents.

### 2. **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Incident**

An incident is an unplanned event, which may or has lead to injury to persons or damage to property or equipment

#### **Hazard**

A hazard is a source of potential harm to people or a situation with potential to cause injury or loss to plant, property or equipment.

#### **Workplace**

Any place, whether or not in a building or structure, where employees or self-employed persons work.

#### **Notifiable Incident**

A notifiable incident is an incident which results in:

- (a) *The death of any person; or*
- (b) *A person requiring medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance; or*
- (c) *A person requiring immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital; or*
- (d) *A person requiring immediate medical treatment for-*
  - (i) *the amputation of any part of his or her body; or*
  - (ii) *a serious head injury; or*
  - (iii) *a serious eye injury; or*
  - (iv) *the separation of his or her skin from underlying tissue (such as de-gloving or scalping); or*
  - (v) *electric shock; or*
  - (vi) *a spinal injury; or*
  - (vii) *the loss of a bodily function; or*
  - (viii) *serious lacerations*

#### **Notifiable Dangerous Occurrence**

A dangerous occurrence is an incident at a workplace which exposed a person in the immediate vicinity of the incident to an immediate risk to the person's health and safety through-

- (a) *The collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any item of plant listed in item 2 of Schedule 2 of the Occupational Health and Safety (Plant) Regulations 1995; or*
- (b) *The collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation; or*
- (c) *The collapse or partial collapse of any part of a building or structure; or*
- (d) *An implosion, explosion or fire; or*

- (e) *The escape, spillage or leakage of any substance including dangerous goods as defined in the Dangerous Goods Act 1985; or*
- (f) *The fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or object.*

### **3. PROCEDURE**

#### **3.1 RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **3.1.1 Deans, Heads of Divisions, Schools or Colleges** are responsible for:

Receiving incident reports relating to matters under their management and control and signing them to confirm they are aware of the incident; are reasonably sure that the information is correct; and are committed to an agreed preventative action.

Reviewing incidents (other than incidences or occurrences that have been notified to WorkSafe in consultation with affected employees to determine appropriate preventative actions.

Informing the appropriate University Office immediately after a notifiable incident of dangerous occurrence has occurred (See 3.2-Notification incident reporting)

Intervening in situations where there is an immediate or continuing threat to the health and safety of persons within their area of management and control, to ensure the threat is controlled. This may involve directing that certain work activities cease or isolating an area until the appropriate controls have been implemented.

##### **3.1.2 All employees** are required to report incidents to their supervisor as soon possible after the incident / near miss has occurred.

##### **3.1.3 The University OHS Section** is responsible for phone and written notification to WorkSafe following notifiable incidents and dangerous occurrences, maintaining the Register of Incidents, reviewing "Preventative Action" on incident reports and undertaking further investigation as necessary in consultation with the Head of School, Divisional Manager.

##### **3.1.4 The Security Office** is responsible for phone notification to WorkSafe of notifiable incidents and dangerous occurrences that occur after hours and for informing the OHS Section at the beginning of the next business day.

#### **3.2 NOTIFIABLE INCIDENT REPORTING**

All notifiable incidents must be reported to WorkSafe in accordance with regulatory requirements. **Under OHS (Notification) Legislation failure to comply, and any subsequent prosecution, can lead to fines, for each offence.**

The Head of School must inform the appropriate office below immediately a notifiable incident or dangerous occurrence has occurred, who will then report the matter to WorkSafe. This also applies to notifiable incidents or dangerous occurrences that occur after hours or off-campus.

All University (except Bendigo) between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.

Occupational Health and Safety Section  
Telephone 9479 2186 or 9479 1186.

Bendigo Campus between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.  
Personnel Services  
Telephone 5444 7901 or 54447474.

All campuses and all hours (and if the above offices cannot be contacted)  
Bundoora Security  
Telephone 9479 2222 (emergency) or 9479 2012

The OH&S Section or the Security Office shall notify the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) immediately after becoming aware of the notifiable incident on **132 360** (all Victoria).

Note: The VWA will advise whether the incident site must be left undisturbed until an inspector can view the site.

A University Incident Report Form (and a detailed written report if appropriate) must be completed and forwarded to the Occupational Health and Safety Section within 48 hours of the incident occurring.

The OHS Section will provide written details of the incident to WorkCover Authority within 48 hours of the incident, using the WorkCover Notifiable Incident Report Form.

### **3.3 PRESERVATION OF AN INCIDENT SITE**

Unless directed otherwise by a WorkCover inspector at the time of notification, the scene of an incident must not be disturbed before a WorkCover inspector arrives. An exemption to this is when the site must be disturbed (or made safe) for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of a person, aiding an injured person involved in an incident or taking action to make the site safe or to prevent a further occurrence of an incident.

### **3.4 INCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND DOCUMENTATION**

When an incident / hazard has been reported an investigation to the causes must take place within 24 hours of the event by the relevant manager / supervisor of the area.

When investigating the incident/hazard all events leading up to the incident should be reviewed. An effective investigation will look for the design, environmental and behavioural components of an incident and not look for a single cause. The investigation should:

- Identify causes, such as design, environment, behavioural or management factors
- Identify problem areas or particular hazards
- Recommend corrective action
- Provide information that can be used as a preventative tool
- Provide management, supervisors, health and safety representatives and committees with data about health and safety problems
- Provide information that can be used to analyse the need for training programs
- Provide information to assist with the preparation of compensation claims.

All investigations must be documented and preventative controls put in place.

The Occupational Health and Safety Section will investigate/assist in investigation of all notifiable incidents and dangerous occurrences in consultation with the area managers.

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### 3.5 THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS

**Step 1** An **immediate inspection** of the site should be conducted. This inspection should provide an objective assessment of the severity of the incident both in human and financial terms.

**Step 2** **Establishment of the events leading up to the incident.**

- These may include,
- What was the system of work being carried out?
- What were the instructions given for the work?
- Were there any variations from instructions or safe work systems?
- What were the workplace conditions such as lighting, floor surface, stair treads, warning signs, weather conditions if the incident occurred outside?
  
- What was the exact location of the incident?
- What materials were used or handled?
- What type of transport or equipment used?

**Step 3** **Facts of the incident itself**

- The state of the systems and the actions that occurred at the moment of the incident.
- Who were the persons directly involved and those involved at a distance, if any?
- What tools, equipment, material and fixtures were directly concerned?
- The time of the incident.

**Step 4** **Relevant facts of what occurred immediately after the incident**

- The injury or damage directly resulting from the incident
- The events leading to consequential injury or damage
- The persons involved, including those rendering first aid
- Any problems in dealing with the injuries or damage such as no method for releasing a trapped person, a faulty extinguisher, isolation switch difficult to locate.

## 4. REFERENCES

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.  
Occupational Health and Safety (Incident Notification) Regulations 1997  
Equipment Public Safety (Incident Notification) Regulations 1997  
WorkCover, Getting Started with Workplace Health and Safety Series  
CCH, Managing Occupational Health and Safety

## 5. CROSS REFERENCES

La Trobe University OHS Policy  
La Trobe University Risk Assessment and Control Procedure.

## 6. DOCUMENTATION

La Trobe University Incident & Hazard Report Form  
Victorian WorkCover Authority Incident Notification Form

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The Executive Occupational Health and Safety Committee approved this procedure at its meeting on 4 June 2001.

The Executive OHS Committee reviewed and updated this procedure at its meeting on 3 March 2005.

The Executive OHS Committee reviewed and updated this procedure at its meeting on 5 December 2005.