

Aberystwyth University Safety Management. Standard Practice Instruction	Reporting of incidents and cases of occupational ill health.	Ref: S 002 Issue: 3.2 Page: 1 of 5 Date Issued: 16 th Nov, 2009
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1.0 Purpose

To provide guidance on the investigation and reporting of incidents and cases of occupational ill health.

2.0 Scope

2.1 'Incidents' includes all events (or near misses) that caused (or had the potential to cause) harm to people, animals, facilities or the environment that arise on AU premises or as a result of AU activities.

Examples include events that involve: accidental injury; fire; electricity; gas; Dangerous Occurrences (such as explosion, collapse of buildings or scaffolding etc) or environmental incidents (such as pollution of watercourses).

2.2 Occupational ill health includes any work-related cause of ill health to staff and students, and ill health to others if caused by AU activities.

2.3 Cases of ill-health that are not related directly to AU activities (e.g. acute medical conditions or self-inflicted injury) should be reported by this procedure if first aid is administered by AU staff or students, if a notifiable disease is determined or if the incident had the potential to cause harm to others.

2.4 This procedure applies to all departments and other units (academic, residential and administrative).

2.5 Incidents occurring within the Guild of Students premises are subject to local reporting procedures, the outcomes of which will be discussed with the AU Health, Safety and Environmental Advisor either at the regular Guild safety committee meetings or when an urgent need arises.

3.0 Responsibility

3.1 Heads of Departments, to ensure procedures are carried out. The HoD can appoint a Departmental Safety Officer to assist in this duty.

3.2 All members of staff and students, to promptly report incidents or cases of occupational ill-health.

3.3 Departmental Safety Officers (DSO). To investigate the circumstances of incidents and report to local management any weakness in current control systems that may have contributed to the incident and to ensure that relevant line management know of the incident where their particular staff or students are involved.

3.4 Managers and Supervisors. To respond to findings of incident investigations, understand any underlying reasons for the incident and take appropriate measures to prevent recurrence. To take charge of the local reporting process as appropriate (if the DSO is unavailable).

3.5 Departmental Safety Committee. To monitor and review incidents that occur as a result of departmental activities or facilities. Report findings to the Head of Department and the AU Health, Safety and Environment Committee (the latter via the Health, Safety and Environmental Advisor).

Aberystwyth University Safety Management. Standard Practice Instruction	Reporting of incidents and cases of occupational ill health.	Ref: S 002 Issue: 3.2 Page: 2 of 5 Date Issued: 16 th Nov, 2009
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3.6 Health, Safety and Environmental Advisor. To receive incident reports (and notifications of employee ill-health attributed to work activities) and make further investigations if judged necessary; compile and analyse records of incidents for AU in order to identify trends and to advise on prioritised remedial measures; determine whether an incident is reportable under RIDDOR and take appropriate action; maintain a central record of incidents.

4.0 Practice

4.1 When an incident occurs, any immediate emergency response must be the priority.

However, key information relating to the incident should be logged as soon as possible. This can be done by the person/s involved or by colleagues if the person/s are incapacitated. Part A of the report form S002F highlights the information that is needed, but any other relevant information should be logged, annotated with times, names, etc and stored carefully in case it is needed in follow-up investigations. Similarly, any physical evidence such as broken machinery, should be protected and stored safely.

The Departmental Safety Officer (DSO) should be informed promptly and he/she complete Part B of the form. If the DSO is not available then a relevant manager should take responsibility for this process.

The relevant manager or supervisor should be made aware of the incident and should then instigate any management changes necessary to prevent a recurrence.

If the incident occurs on AU grounds (other than sports areas) away from the immediate environs of buildings, or in communal areas in multi-user buildings, House Services staff would normally be responsible for completing the report form. However, this is not exclusively the case and the form can be completed by any appropriate person: the HS&E Advisor will subsequently ensure that the relevant manager in the Estates Office is informed as necessary (where the underlying cause is in the purview of that Office).

4.2 If the incident (or near miss) is judged to be serious (see section 6.1) the Health, Safety and Environmental Advisor needs to be informed as soon as possible.

Absence from work for more than three days (including weekends if the person is unfit for work) caused by work-related accident or illness must be reported promptly.

Trivial incidents need not be reported, again a decision that requires an element of subjective judgement to be exercised in some cases. For instance, a 'paper-cut' to the finger would not normally be reported, whereas a cut from a modelling knife would be; burnt toast usually would not, but a grill pan fire needing extinguishing by fire blanket or other appliance would be.

4.3 Any incident involving fire (defined as a heat source that has to be extinguished by the use of fire fighting equipment or the intervention of the Fire Brigade) should be reported immediately, or at the start of the next working day, to the HS&E Advisor (x2384 or arw@aber.ac.uk, or FAX x1684)

4.4 Given the wide range and large numbers of events (not all relevant to HS&E) that are recorded in the AU student residences, further guidance on incident reporting is given in section 6.2.

4.5 A copy of the completed form should be taken and stored as the departmental record (after bringing it to the attention of the appropriate manager or supervisor), the original should be

Aberystwyth University Safety Management. Standard Practice Instruction	Reporting of incidents and cases of occupational ill health.	Ref: S 002 Issue: 3.2 Page: 3 of 5 Date Issued: 16 th Nov, 2009
--	--	---

sent to the Health, Safety and Environmental Advisor who will investigate as appropriate and copy reports of serious incidents to the AU Insurance Officer and others who have a legitimate need to have access. Departments to keep a record of all who receive extra copies of individual incident reports; similarly the HS&E office to keep such records of copies made for others. Copies of all RIDDOR reports are to be sent to the Registrar & Secretary and the Chairman of the AU HS&E Committee by the HS&E office.

Note: If an individual is named in the report (typically the injured person) they are entitled to receive a copy of the completed report on request to the HS&E Advisor.

- 4.6 Records that involve people are subject to the Data Protection Act (1998) and as such access is restricted to those functions responsible for securing the health, safety and welfare of persons at work, or for protecting persons other than persons at work against risk to health or safety arising out of or in connection with the actions of persons at work (section 31, DPA 1998).

Such records should be stored for five years after the person has ceased to be a member of AU; or 60 years if the report concerns occupational ill-health or relevant exposure to hazardous materials with long-term health implications (such as asbestos); or five years after the incident if the person was not a member of AU; following which the paper records should be destroyed as confidential waste.

Electronic records, omitting personal details, can be kept indefinitely for statistical purposes.

5.0 References

AU Incident report form (S002F)

Data Protection Act 1998 (Stationery Office, London)

Aberystwyth University Safety Management. Standard Practice Instruction	Reporting of incidents and cases of occupational ill health.	Ref: S 002 Issue: 3.2 Page: 4 of 5 Date Issued: 16 th Nov, 2009
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6.0 Appendices

6.1 **Guidance on ‘seriousness’ of an incident or health condition that will need reporting immediately.**

Judgement will need to be exercised on what constitutes a **serious** incident. If in doubt seek advice from the HS&E Advisor.

Included would be:

- explosions;
- significant fire;
- serious vehicle collision;
- loss or escape of very toxic chemicals or dangerous pathogens;
- collapse of scaffolding, walls or other parts of buildings;
- major electrical short circuits;
- malfunction of radiation generators;
- flammable gas leaks;
- loss of oil or other polluting substances to watercourses or sewerage system;
- other incidents which have caused significant harm to people, or easily could have.

Also included are **major injuries**:

- all fractures, except to thumbs, fingers and toes;
- all amputations;
- shoulder, hip, knee or spine dislocations;
- temporary and permanent loss of sight and any burns (chemical/hot metal), or other penetrating injuries, to the eye;
- injuries due to electric shock or burns which require resuscitation, or which result in hospitalisation for more than 24 hours, or cause unconsciousness;
- any injury resulting in the need for resuscitation, or hospitalisation for more than 24 hours, or in hypothermia, heat-induced illness or unconsciousness;
- unconsciousness due to asphyxia or exposure to a harmful substance — including biological agents;
- acute illnesses that require medical treatment, or that result in unconsciousness, due to substances being inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin;
- acute illnesses requiring medical treatment, which are believed to be due to exposure to infected material, or to biological agents or their toxins.
- certain longer term illnesses (such as work-related upper limb disorders such as repetitive strain injury and carpal tunnel syndrome).

Aberystwyth University Safety Management. Standard Practice Instruction	Reporting of incidents and cases of occupational ill health.	Ref: S 002 Issue: 3.2 Page: 5 of 5 Date Issued: 16 th Nov, 2009
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6.2 Guidance for RHS staff and Wardening / Student Support staff on reporting H&S matters concerning students in AU-owned or managed residential properties.

6.2.1 Primary involvement: RHS Staff

Determine whether any of the criteria in section 6.2.3 apply to the situation and, if so, then the standard procedure is to be followed, with the addition that a copy of the completed incident report form should be given to Student Support (original to Safety and Environment Office, other copy to be held by RHS).

6.2.2 Primary involvement: Wardening Staff

Determine whether any of the criteria in section 6.2.3 apply to the situation and, if so, then the standard procedure is to be followed, with the addition that a copy of the completed incident report form should be taken for Student Support records (original to Safety and Environment Office, other copy to RHS).

Note: *It is expected that RHS Staff (Porters or Management) would normally be involved or summoned to such incidents.*

6.2.3 Relevant criteria which would initiate the incident reporting system in this context

- fire (flame or smouldering, that has to be extinguished by fire fighting equipment)
- candles, or other devices with naked flames (eg oil lamps) whether lit or unlit
- dangerous interference with safety equipment (eg smoke detectors, fire extinguishers etc)
- notifiable disease
- accidental injury
- physical violence / assault
- any occasion when first aid is administered (including cases of self-harm)
- unauthorised electrical equipment
- blocking of escape routes (e.g. with bicycles, storage boxes, trunks etc)
- air pistols, air rifles or firearms (real or imitation) - whether or not injury is caused
- unauthorised entry into study bedrooms or flats
- prowlers

6.2.4 All cases of fire alarm activations should be reported via RHS staff using the on-line fire report form. The paper incident report form need only be completed in cases of actual fire.

6.2.5 Recognising that RHS and Wardening staff work closely together, and are often jointly involved in managing an incident (or other situation), there should be an unambiguous agreement between all parties at the end of the incident who is to complete the report form/s - normally this would be RHS staff.