



**St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)
First Aid Services
Office of the Assistant Commissioner (Operations)**

State Operations Instructional Circular

Subject : **Incident Reporting**

Circular No. : SOIC 2014/04 **Date Issued** : 02 April 2014

Reference : Respective Divisional / Regional Superintendent

From time to time, incidents will occur in FAS that should be reported up the reporting lines in a timely manner. Incidents are further defined on the *attached document* and it should be noted that an incident is not always of a negative nature but could be of a positive nature e.g. a successful resuscitation effort.

In the age of most having ready access to means of mass communication via forums like social media, it is stressed that notification should be done in a *timely manner*. *Notification should be carried out as a matter of priority* - in many cases, information 'hours old' really is the material of the archivist.

Members are reminded that notification of an incident, should be via the appropriate reporting line ('chain of command') i.e. member→divisional OIC→region→State. The normal/appropriate process would be that the team leader/commander present at an event, would be the person responsible for ensuring notification occurs.

Members on duty, witnessing or being part of an incident, are NOT to place details on or report the incident via social media e.g. Facebook. To do so, could place the member in breach of policies like the St John social media usage policy and patient confidentiality. Breaches of such policies would be seen as *serious*. Adopt a safe approach and keep details of an incident, off social media.

Regions should be carrying out incident notification by the use of the incidents@stjohnnsw.com.au e-mail address. Do not rely on e-mail alone – such notifications should be backed up with notification by either telephone or in person to your supervisor.

Attention by all to the timely notification, via the appropriate reporting lines is appreciated.

**Colin LOTT
Assistant Commissioner (Operations)**

May Safety Message - A Guide to Incident Reporting

Incident Reporting is an important process within St John, however it can be unclear what should be reported to your supervising officer, and what is business as usual. It can be difficult for your leaders to respond and fix issues, when they are not reported in a timely manner, so the purpose of this month's message is to reinforce the sorts of issues that should be reported, what detail is needed and how it should be reported.

What is an incident or near incident?

An incident or near incident can be any scenario which has or could lead to a loss for St John or a member of St John.

Typical incidents that occur within St John can be grouped into four areas – incidents relating to:

- St John Members
- St John Assets
- St John Brand or Image
- St John Policy/Protocols or Guidelines

Examples may include member(s) injury/medical treatment at an event or at a St John meeting, damage to St John assets (vehicles, equipment or buildings) or significant relationships, providing CPR or treatment of a serious cases, media attention, insurance claims and any significant breaches of St John policy, guidelines, code of conduct, privacy or treatment protocols *and* any near-miss events where this might have occurred if some other action wasn't taken.

If you're not sure if something is an incident or near incident, you should seek guidance from your Divisional or Regional Officers or the Event Commander (if you are at a major event).

Why do incidents need to be communicated?

Often there is a fear that reporting incidents, might lead to the person reporting getting into trouble or that management might not take them seriously, however at St John it is really important that incidents and issues are reported, so that action can be taken to resolve or improve the situation.

The swift reporting of incidents is about identifying the problem, near-miss or opportunity and initiating steps to address it, it is not about attributing blame. In terms of near-misses, reporting them allows an opportunity for the underlying issue(s) to be addressed and so potentially prevent a serious accident to one of our members and colleagues.

Reporting of incidents also enables recognition and award opportunities to be acted on, such as in the case of a successful resuscitation – which can be missed if management is not made aware of the situation.

Reporting also allows St John to proactively and fully address incidents while the event is still current and relevant, rather than after an undue period of time has passed or a near-miss has resulted in a significant accident or incident.

Why is time important when reporting?

Timely reporting is key to this process, as it helps us respond quickly to provide support, logistics, resources, guidance and information to those involved or affected.

It is also vital for ensuring member welfare networks are activated as soon as possible to support our members, be it Chaplaincy, VEAP (Volunteer and Employee Assistance Program) or support from Division/Region/State Officers.

Timely reporting also permits important information to be documented while it is able to be accurately recalled, such as for insurance purposes in the case of a vehicle accident.

For stakeholder relationships or media, timely reporting enables us to respond appropriately to maximise an opportunity or to positively influence a key relationship.

Who needs to be notified when an incident occurs?

Divisional Duties/Meetings and Incidents Occurring Outside St John Activities

If something occurs at a Divisional Duty or during other divisional business, and an incident or near incident occurs, then the Team Leader or most senior member on duty should take responsibility for reporting the incident to the Divisional Officer or Divisional Superintendent as soon as is practicable. Information to be communicated includes the time and location of the incident, the names of the member(s) involved and a summary of the nature of the incident. Any actions taken to respond to or resolve the incident should also be included eg OB12, member sent home from duty or police notification of a motor vehicle accident.

An *Incident/Hazard Reporting and Investigation Form* should then be completed at the earliest opportunity and submitted to the Divisional Management Team.

The *Incident/Hazard Reporting and Investigation Form* can be found here: <http://one.stjohnnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/incident-and-hazard-reporting-and-investigation-form-hr-7.7.1-21.2.06.pdf> on the St John (NSW) member's website.

Major Events (including State Duties)

If an incident occurs at a Major Event or State Event, the member(s) involved are responsible for communicating the incident to their Post or Team Leader, who is responsible for notifying the incident immediately via radio or telephone to the Operations Centre and Commander. An *Incident/Hazard Reporting and Investigation Form* should then be completed at the earliest opportunity and submitted to the Event Commander.

The *Incident/Hazard Reporting and Investigation Form* can be found here: <http://one.stjohnnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/incident-and-hazard-reporting-and-investigation-form-hr-7.7.1-21.2.06.pdf> on the St John (NSW) member's website.

OB12's and Form for Reporting Incidents and Hazards (HR7.7.1)

An *Incident/Hazard Reporting and Investigation Form (HR 7.7.1)* should be completed at the earliest opportunity and passed on to your superior. The form acts as a prompt for ensuring key information is accurately and quickly captured. The *Incident/Hazard Reporting and Investigation Form* can be found here: <http://one.stjohnnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/incident-and-hazard-reporting-and-investigation-form-hr-7.7.1-21.2.06.pdf>

Note: If the incident involves treatment of or injury to a Member, an OB12 must also be completed.

More Information

For more information contact your Divisional or Regional Officers or the State Support Officer (HR).