



RISK

MANAGEMENT

SUPPLEMENT TO MODULE 1
SPECIFIC PARISH INCIDENT
NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

MAXIMISING MINISTRY BY MINIMISING HARM

February 2008

INTRODUCTION

This is a supplement to **Module 1 – People Movement, Emergency Evacuation and Fire** and covers the process for notification of certain incidents involving injury or illness that may occur on parish sites. It needs to be read and applied in the light of the previous introductory sections – ‘**A Risk Management Program for Parishes**’ (Overview) and ‘**Developing a Risk Management Plan**’ (Plan).

Reminder: A parish has a general duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work for ministry staff, other employees, volunteers ministering in any way in our parishes and visitors to our site(s) or the functions that we run. This duty of care also extends to contractors and sub-contractors while they carry out work on our premises.

THE DIOCESAN PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING NOTIFIABLE INCIDENTS

All parishes (as occupiers and controllers of premises and/or employers) are required under Occupational, Health and Safety Regulation 2001, to notify WorkCover NSW and/or their workers compensation insurer when a ‘**notifiable**’ incident occurs on a parish site.

To assist parishes and parish office bearers, a Diocesan procedure has been established to **facilitate notifications to WorkCover**, where required.

This means that parishes will have access to an expert in the field of WorkCover notification at a time when urgent advice and assistance may be required.

Parishes will need to contact their workers’ compensation insurers where notification to the insurer is necessary (i.e., injuries to employees).

The number to call is 1300 302 442

The procedure is for the representative of the parish (usually a churchwarden) to ring the dedicated 1300 number, where detailed instructions will be given by a recorded message before being put through to a Diocesan representative who can provide advice and assistance.

The procedure allows the Diocese to assist the parish to manage the incident in a professional way as there will be certain actions that will need to take place, such as:

- Notifying WorkCover;
- Notification to the Property Trust as owners of the property;
- Notification to the Diocesan Insurers;
- Immediate engagement of workplace incident investigators, as necessary;
- Notifying senior clergy; and
- Liaising with WorkCover investigators, the police and/or various media outlets, as necessary.

The Diocesan procedure complies with WorkCover NSW regulations for notifiable incidents.

IMPORTANT: Parish personnel should not make any comment either verbally or written (particularly to media organisations) without first seeking advice from a Diocesan representative.

NOTIFIABLE INCIDENTS

The dedicated 1300 number must be called in the event of **any notifiable incident** occurring on parish sites, as described below.

As controllers of the premises, **the churchwardens must be involved in any incident notification** and ideally the churchwardens should call the 1300 number in the first instance. If they are unavailable, **do not wait** – call the number immediately.

“ As controllers of the premises, the churchwardens must be involved in any incident notification... ”

Notifiable incidents are divided into two categories: Serious Incidents and Other Incidents.

PLEASE NOTE: In the event of an incident, provide immediate assistance as required (e.g. first aid) and call emergency services if necessary.

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1. Serious and immediately notifiable incidents

Call 1300 302 442 **immediately**.

Examples of a **serious incident requiring immediate notification** are:

- An incident where there has been a fatality.
- An incident where there has been a serious injury or illness, such as when a person:
 - ⊕ has a limb amputated
 - ⊕ is placed on a life support system
 - ⊕ loses consciousness
 - ⊕ suffers significant lacerations
 - ⊕ is trapped in machinery or a confined space
 - ⊕ has serious burns
- An incident that presents an **immediate threat to life**, but results in no injury or illness, such as:
 - ⊕ **exposure** to hazardous substances, electric shock or lack of oxygen
 - ⊕ **major damage** to any plant, equipment, building or structure (e.g., collapse of an excavation)
 - ⊕ an **uncontrolled** explosion or fire, escape of gas, dangerous goods or steam
 - ⊕ **imminent risk** of explosion or fire, escape of gas, dangerous goods or steam
 - ⊕ a **spill or incident** resulting in exposure or potential exposure of a person to a notifiable or prohibited carcinogenic substance (e.g., asbestos fibres)

All immediately notifiable incidents will be put through to the Diocese representative who is an expert in WorkCover notification procedures. The Diocesan representative will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If the 1300 number is not working – call the WorkCover incident notification number - 131 050 immediately and then call the Diocesan Insurance Officer on 9265 1679.

Please note: After a serious incident has occurred, **the immediate area around the incident must not be disturbed for a period of 36 hours**, except to assist any injured persons and to avoid further injuries and problems. It may be necessary for investigations to be carried out by WorkCover, the police and/or a representative of the Diocese. When the necessary investigations have been carried out, a representative of the Diocese or WorkCover will give clearance to access the area.

2. Other incidents that are not immediately notifiable

Certain **other incidents** that occur are also notifiable, although, they are not immediately notifiable if they **DO NOT present as an immediate risk to life**.

Call 1300 302 442 the **same or next business day** for incidents of this type, and follow the prompts.

Examples of **other incidents requiring notification** are:

- An injury or illness to a person that results in the person being unfit for work for a continuous period of at least 7 days (supported by a medical certificate).
- Exposure to hazardous substances, electric shock or lack of oxygen.
- Damage to any plant, equipment, building or structure or other thing that impedes safe operation.
- An uncontrolled explosion or fire, escape of gas, dangerous goods or steam.
- A spill or incident resulting in exposure or potential exposure of a person to a notifiable or prohibited carcinogenic substance.
- Exposure to bodily fluids that presents a risk of transmission of blood-borne diseases.
- The use or threatened use of a weapon that involves a risk of serious injury to, or illness of, a person (including a weapon used in a robbery).
- Electric shock that involves a risk of serious injury to a person.
- Any incident that involves a risk of one of the above occurring and/or serious injury or illness or substantial property damage.

Please note: These lists are not exhaustive of the particular incidents required to be notified. If an incident occurs and you are unsure of whether you have an obligation to notify, it is best to assume that you do have to notify unless and until you are advised otherwise by a competent person.

NOTIFIABLE INCIDENTS THAT OCCUR ON NON-PARISH OWNED SITES

If a “serious” or “other” incident occurs ‘off site’ (e.g., a camping site, rented premises or in a public place), **call 1300 302 442 for instructions**. Also, immediately advise the owners of the premises.

“Notifiable incidents involving persons employed by the parish... must be reported to the parish’s workers’ compensation insurer within 48 hours.”

INJURIES TO EMPLOYEES

Notifiable incidents involving persons employed by the parish (e.g., lay workers, administrative staff) must be reported to the parish's workers' compensation insurer **within 48 hours**. This procedure does not apply to ministry staff (e.g., rectors).

In addition to the Incident Report, a **Register of Injuries** must be kept for all injuries to employees of the parish for workers' compensation purposes.

This matter is covered in the **Employment Relations – Guidelines for Parishes** that was issued by SDS Legal Services in June 2007. Please refer to **Part 9 Health Safety and Workers' Compensation** and the sample register in **Appendix D**.

NON-NOTIFIABLE INCIDENTS

It is important to remember that in addition to the above, **all incidents must be recorded by the parish** and a copy in the prescribed form sent to the Diocesan Insurance Officer (refer page 5 & 16 of Module 1).

“ If in doubt as to whether the incident is notifiable or immediately notifiable, call 1300 302 442 straight away for further instructions. ”

SUMMARY

When **an incident** occurs:

- Administer first aid and/or call emergency services on 000.
- Notify the churchwardens and rector.
- Is the incident a notifiable incident? If so, is it immediately notifiable? If yes, call 1300 302 442 straight away.
- If not immediately notifiable, call 1300 302 442 the same day or at the beginning of the next business day.
- If in doubt as to whether the incident is notifiable or immediately notifiable, call 1300 302 442 straight away for further instructions.
- Ideally a churchwarden should call the 1300 number. If no churchwarden is available, another responsible person must call.

PLEASE PLACE THE INCIDENT NOTIFICATION WALL CHART IN A PROMINENT POSITION IN THE CHURCH OFFICE OR ANOTHER APPROPRIATE AREA.

Note: The Parish Risk Management CD has a soft copy version of the wall chart should you require more copies for your site(s).



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