

Reporting: It's No Accident

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As much as we try to prevent them, accidents happen - whether that be at home, out and about or at work.

As an employer, it is extremely important that if an accident happens in the workplace, you know what your obligations are in terms of reporting that incident to the relevant authority. There are also certain complaints that must be reported and correctly investigated, such as complaints of bullying or harassment.

Safe Work Australia has an informative website, with various fact sheets aimed at helping employees and employers to know what they need to do if there is an incident at work that causes injury, or is a "near miss".

As the name suggests, a "notifiable incident" is one that falls into the category that you must report to the safe work regulator in the relevant state. In one of the fact sheets on the Safe Work Australia website there is a great summary that sets out what amounts to a "notifiable incident" and also provides a table of examples which can provide valuable guidance to the employer (see www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au within the "publications and resources" section).

The reason it is so important you know your obligations on reporting is that to fail to do so can lead to serious repercussions for an employer. Further, you must ensure you carry out those reporting requirements immediately (and certainly no later than 48 hours after the incident). This notification process can be carried out by telephone to ensure the quickest communication of the incident.

A failure to report could quite possibly amount to a more serious result for you as an employer than the consequences of reporting and taking the correct steps in the first place. A correct investigation is also mandatory, and those requirements will be considered next week.

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Elsbeth's articles can be accessed on the Daily Mercury website at <http://www.dailymercury.com.au/topic/elsbeth-ledwy/> or you can find Elsbeth's column "Mind Your Own Business" in the Daily Mercury newspaper each Wednesday.



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