

# **PRINCIPLES OF CAREGIVING DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES MODULE**

## **CHAPTER 6: INCIDENT REPORTING**

### **CONTENT:**

- A. Types of Incidents
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  - 1. Basics: The purpose of incident reporting
  - 2. Steps to take when an incident occurs
  - 3. Reporting emergency measures
  - 4. When completing an incident report

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**COMPETENCIES:**

**(TO KNOW OR BE ABLE TO:)**

1. Identify examples of incidents that need to be reported.
2. List the steps a DCW must take when an incident occurs.
3. List who needs to be notified about an incident.
4. Identify time frames for reporting incidents.
5. Identify essential components for documentation of an incident report.

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**KEY TERMS:**

Emergency measure

Serious incident

Incident

Verbal report

Incident report

Written objectively

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## A. TYPES OF INCIDENTS

An incident is an event or occurrence that could potentially impact the health and well-being of an individual, his/her relatives, the State of Arizona, the service provider or the community. This could include situations that may be considered news-worthy and/or incur liability to the State of Arizona or the provider agency. An incident is **anything** that could negatively impact the person, the provider or the Division. **Incidents must be reported.**

Some incidents are considered “serious” incidents and have a higher reporting priority. If you are ever not sure if something would be considered a Serious Incident, just notify your supervisor right away and they will help you determine the reporting procedure that should be followed.

### DISCUSSION POINT: What is an incident?

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### Types of Incidents - Examples

**Incidents** can include, but are not limited to:

- Death of an individual.
- Potentially dangerous situations due to neglect of an individual.
- Allegations of suspected sexual, physical, programmatic, or verbal/emotional abuse.
- A missing individual.

- Accidental injuries that may or may not result in medical intervention.
- Violation of an individual’s rights.
- Fraud (for example: falsifying timesheets).
- Complaints about a group home or someone who live in a group home.
- Allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Circumstances that pose a threat to the health, safety or welfare of individuals, such as loss of air conditioning, loss of water or loss of electricity.
- Use of behavior management techniques that are not part of a behavior building plan.
- Theft or loss of an individual’s money or property.
- The use of emergency measures as defined by Article 9.
  - Physical management techniques employed in an emergency to manage a sudden, intense, or out-of-control.
- Problems with medications.
- Community disturbances in which the individual or the public may have been placed at risk.
- Serious work related illness or injury.
- Threats to Division or provider employees or property and non-consumer/non-employee accidents that occur on state or provider property.
- Unplanned hospitalization or emergency room visit in response to an illness, injury, or medication error.
- Unusual weather conditions or other disasters resulting in an emergency change of operations.
- Provider drug use.

### **Serious incidents**

Serious incidents require immediate notification to the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). The Division interprets “immediately” as the first allowable opportunity that does not place the consumer or staff at undue risk, as applicable to the situation. Notification must occur within 24 hours of the incident. If someone in your agency is not available, you are required to report this incident directly to the Division/support coordinator; check your agency’s policy for reporting. The DCW must also report all suspected incidents of abuse and neglect to the appropriate protective services and law enforcement agency.

**Serious incidents** could include, but are not limited to:

- All deaths.
- All suspected allegations of abuse and neglect.
- Any situation that poses a serious and immediate threat to the physical or emotional well-being of an individual or staff member.

- Severe personal injury – a physical injury that creates a reasonable risk of death, causes serious or permanent disfigurement or causes serious impairment of a consumer’s health.
- A situation in which a person, who cannot be unsupervised at home or in the community, runs away or is missing.
- Property damage estimated in excess of \$10,000.
- A situation that involves the theft or loss of an individual’s money or property of more than \$1000.
- A situation that involves reporting to law enforcement officials because a Division-enrolled individual is missing and presumed to be in imminent danger.
- A situation that involves reporting to law enforcement officials due to possession and/or illegal substance use by individuals or staff/providers.
- A situation that results in a 911 call due to a suicide attempt by an individual.
- A situation that involves an incident or complaint from the community that will be or is reported on the front pages of the newspaper or on television/radio.

Your employer may also want you to report damage to any property or other situations that are “out of the ordinary.” Your agency will determine whether to classify these incidents as serious or not.

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## **B. INCIDENT REPORTING**

### **1. Basics: The purpose of incident reporting**

- A communication tool.
- A way to protect the Direct Care Worker.
  - An incident report protects the direct care worker, the agency they work for, and the state of Arizona by ensuring that all responses to an incident are documented.
- A way to promote health and safety.
  - An incident report ensures that issues are addressed that could negatively affect the person.
- A method for gathering trending data.

- Incident reporting helps the family and team to see patterns and provides a record of incidents and occurrences. This may benefit the family and team in addressing triggers or patterns of problems that have occurred.
- A way to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
  - It allows the family and team to address problem areas. For example, if a person is hitting their shins as they get out of bed, causing injury and pain, an incident report will let everyone know that there is a problem with the bed or bedroom set up so that it can be changed.
- A way to provide communication between responsible parties, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the provider agency, and the Direct Care Worker.
- A tool to report on issues of concern that need follow-up.
  - Without an incident report, the people who are in a position to make a difference may not know all the information they need to take action. The incident report allows the provider agency, that State of Arizona, and the responsible person and family (when appropriate) to take the steps needed to resolve a problem or issue.

## 2. Steps to take when an incident occurs

### “When in doubt, fill it out.”

**In the event of a situation that could be considered an incident, follow these steps:**

- First and foremost, take whatever actions are necessary to resolve any emergencies and ensure the health and safety of any individuals involved. This may include calling 911 or taking other emergency actions.

#### **For incidents:**

- Complete a written report of the incident as soon as possible, but before the end of your work day.
- The provider agency must provide the written report to the District (DES/DDD) by the close of the next business day. You, the Direct Care Worker, may be responsible for sending it, or your supervisor may ask you to give it to them and they will send it.
- A copy of the report must also be sent to the responsible person if there is one. Again, you may be responsible for sending it, or your supervisor may ask for the incident report to send it.

### **For serious incidents**

- Complete a written report of the serious incident as soon as possible, but before the end of your work day.
- The provider agency must provide a verbal and written report to the Division.
- **Within 24 hours** of a serious incident the following actions must be taken:
  - The service provider must make a verbal report of the incident to the District (DES/DDD). There are after-hours reporting systems if the incident occurs after hours or on weekends.
  - A written report must be completed and submitted to the District (DES/DDD) within 24 hours of the incident.
  - Notification to the responsible person (guardian, family member, etc.) must be made within 24 hours.

### **3. Reporting emergency measures**

When an emergency physical management technique is employed to manage a sudden, intense and out-of-control behavior, the person employing the measure must:

- Immediately report the circumstances of the emergency measure to DES/DDD and the responsible person.
- After calling the above individuals, submit a full and complete written report of the circumstances of the emergency measure within one working day to the Support Coordinator and the District Central Reporting Site.
- The DCW responsibility in this is to ensure the immediate notification occurs and to write the Incident Report as quickly as is safe and prudent to do so, but before the end of their shift.

DES/DDD interprets “immediately” as the first allowable opportunity that does not place the client or staff at undue risk, as applicable to the situation, and not to exceed 24 hours.

In your report of an emergency measure you will want to include the following information:

- All interventions used before the emergency measure was implemented.
- A statement of how the individual’s behavior presented imminent danger (injury to self, others or severe property damage).

- That the behavior showed continuance, or a likelihood of continuing (the intensity was going to continue if you did not intervene).
- Information regarding any injuries that may have occurred and care steps taken to care for those injuries.

#### 4. When completing an incident report

##### All incident reports must be:

- Completed in blue or black ink. Your agency may require you to use a specific color.
- Corrected accurately.
  - If you make an error, draw a single line through the error and your initials and the date the change was made.
  - Never scribble out an error.
  - Never use correction fluid or tape on an incident report form.
  - Never erase anything on an incident report.
- Written clearly, objectively and in the order of occurrence, without reference to the writer's opinion. Keep in mind that these reports are available to family/guardians and are considered legal documents. "Objective" means you state facts, not opinions.

A good example:

*Music was playing on the radio in the living room. Sally came out of her room and made the statement "the music is bothering me. Please turn it off."*

Do not write:

*Sally came storming out of her room because she didn't like the song that was playing on the radio and demanded that I turn it off. She was really mad.*

##### All incident reports:

- Include demographic information like:
  - Full name
  - Address
  - Date of birth
  - Identification number
- Include the names and titles of all Direct Care Workers who witnessed the incident or were involved in it.

## Chapter 6: Incident Reporting – If in doubt, fill it out!

- Include a description of the incident including all known facts, location, and the date and time the incident occurred.
- Include causes of injury (if applicable).
- State whether or not the responsible person was notified and, if not, the reason.
- Include whether or not law enforcement, Adult/Child Protective Services, or Tribal Social Services have been contacted.
- Include signatures and names of the person completing the report and his/her supervisor and any additional comments.
- Must be completed for each individual involved in the incident and not breach the confidentiality of other individuals.
- Must be maintained by the provider agency and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Support Coordinator.

If more than one individual who receives services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities is involved in the incident, write a separate report for each person. Use only the individual's name for which the report is being written. Refer to other persons generically, e.g. housemate, roommate, peer, friend, etc.