

Incident Alerts

Standard Operating Procedure

Purpose

To outline the process for SafeWork SA to publish an Incident Alert following the occurrence of a serious work-related incident, which may have resulted in serious injury, illness or death.

Background

The purpose of publishing an Incident Alert is to alert workers and other persons to the occurrence of a serious work-related incident in order to provide information that is considered necessary to lessen or prevent a serious risk to public health or safety.

SafeWork SA seeks to protect workers and other persons against harm to their health, safety and welfare through the elimination or minimisation of risks arising from work that is similar in nature to the work in which the serious incident happened.

Safety Alerts may be published in addition to Incident Alerts. Safety Alerts may be developed by the Manager of the relevant inspectorate team and may provide further information and details relating to the hazard.

This procedure is not intended to relate to matters which have been prosecuted and finalised before the Court where information is a matter of public record.

Procedure

Determining if an Incident Alert is required

Following a serious work-related incident and the subsequent email from the relevant Inspectorate Manager to the Incident Notification DL to notify of the incident, initial consideration should be given by the Regulator to whether it is appropriate to issue an Incident Alert in accordance with the exercise of its legislative purpose and function pursuant to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)* (the WHS Act). The Chief Inspector and the Communications and Education Services (CES) Manager will make the initial determination as to the requirement for an Incident Alert relating to an incident. The process for receipt, review and approval for Incident Alerts is set out at page 4 of this Procedure.

An Incident Alert will only be required if disclosure of the information related to the incident is deemed by the Regulator to be necessary in order to lessen or prevent a serious risk to public health or safety. Further considerations for developing an Incident Alert should include the availability of safety messaging, relevant resources or targeted activities, other available mechanisms for effecting the purpose and function of the Regulator and sensitivity of content.

Where possible, an Incident Alert should refer to SafeWork SA's official website for relevant supporting general safety information.

Confidentiality related to Incident Alerts

Section 271 of the WHS Act provides that information obtained by the exercise of any power or function under this Act must not be disclosed. However subsection (3) allows disclosure if the information is considered necessary to lessen or prevent a serious risk to public health or safety.

Care must be taken that the information provided falls within this exception or within another exception as provided for under the Act.

Incident Alert format

The Incident Alert will be drafted by the CES Team with support from the Manager or inspector of the relevant Inspectorate team.

Incident Alerts will be split into two clear sections.

Section 1 will communicate the incident and related hazard

Section 2 will communicate general safety information that relates to the incident and related hazard with a clear heading 'General safety information' to lessen or prevent a serious risk to public health or safety.

Section 1	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p><i>We are investigating an incident that occurred [timeframe- if necessary] in [location- if necessary] where a [worker/member of the public] has been [fatally injured/seriously injured]. It is believed/it is understood [general description of the incident/ hazard ie suffered injuries to his arm in an unguarded chopping machine]. Investigations are continuing.</i></p>
Section 2	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>General safety information:</p> <p><i>SafeWork SA reminds everyone about the importance of working safely [provide safe work information relevant to the incident and link to further safety resources if available].</i></p>

The description of the incident must be preceded by "it is believed / it is understood" as appropriate. The description of the incident should be as general as practicable and should be restricted to those elements which effect the purpose of the Incident Alert without any superfluous identifying information, such as the name of involved businesses or people.

Details that are not related to public safety will not be included.

Timeframe

Where possible every effort should be made to publish an Incident Alert on the SafeWork SA website and social media channels within 24 hours (or the next business day) of a serious incident occurring.

Incident Alert approvals

The wording of the Incident Alert will be developed by:

- a member of the communication team
- the relevant Inspectorate Manager
- the relevant Inspector
- a Workplace Advisor

The drafted Incident Alert will then be reviewed and approved by each of the following (in order):

1. Relevant Inspectorate team Manager and Inspector (for review and approval);
2. Communications Manager (for review and approval);
3. SafeWork SA Solicitor (Crown Solicitor's Office) (for review);
4. Chief Inspector (for review and approval);
5. Executive Director (for review and approval);
6. Investigation Manager (as a fyi).

Once approval is granted by the Executive Director, the Incident Alert will be flagged with the CES media officer to note for potential media management in accordance with the SafeWork SA Media Strategy.

Incident Alert Procedure map



Review

This Standard Operating Procedure must be reviewed two years after the last issue date and must be immediately modified if practices and/or procedures change.

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