



Incident and Near Miss Reporting Guidance

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance note is to explain the process to be followed when an employee reports an incident or near miss to their line manager. As an employer Aberdeen City Council has responsibilities to record all workplace incidents and near misses and to report specific incidents to the Health and Safety Executive. There is also a legal requirement to carry out incident and near miss investigations and to put in place remedial measures to prevent recurrence. Further guidance on this can be found in the Corporate Health and Safety policy and in the health and safety pages.

Definitions

Incident: An incident is something unexpected that has happened in the workplace, which has caused any personal injury, ill-health, or death of an employee or member of the public, or damage to property. This could be anything from slipping or tripping, something falling on their head, burning themselves, part of a building collapsing, or being subject to physical/inappropriate communication abuse.

Near Miss: There are several different definitions of the term 'Near Miss'. For the purposes of managing Health & Safety across Aberdeen City Council (ACC) the definition that best describes a 'Near Miss' is:

'A near miss is an event or situation that could have resulted in injury, ill health, damage or loss but did not do so due to chance, corrective action and/or timely intervention'.

Appendix 1 exemplifies Near Miss.

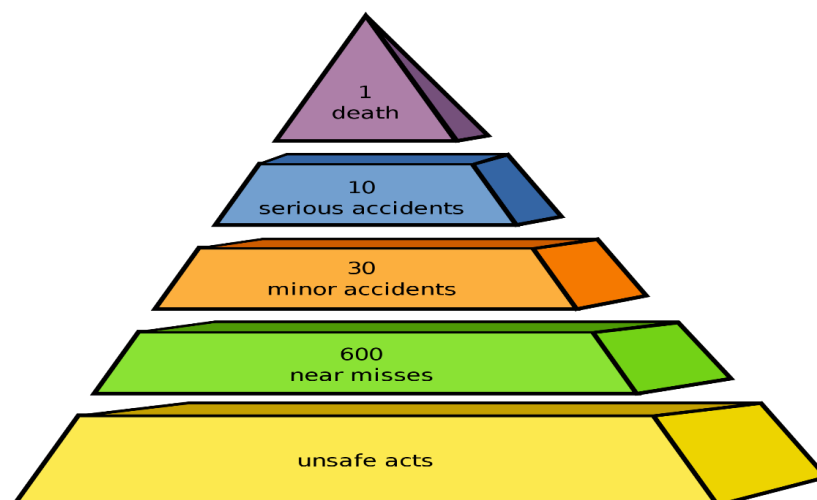
This document will be stored on, and accessed from, the H&S pages of the ACC employees' intranet. Near Miss, Incident, and Investigation Forms are accessed via YourHR.

Why Reporting Matters

In simple terms we want to prevent accidents from occurring or reoccurring and the reports generated gives managers and supervisors the opportunity to investigate the circumstances and take prompt remedial action.

There have been numerous studies into the relationship between instances of Near Misses and major injuries (illustration 1).

Illustration 1

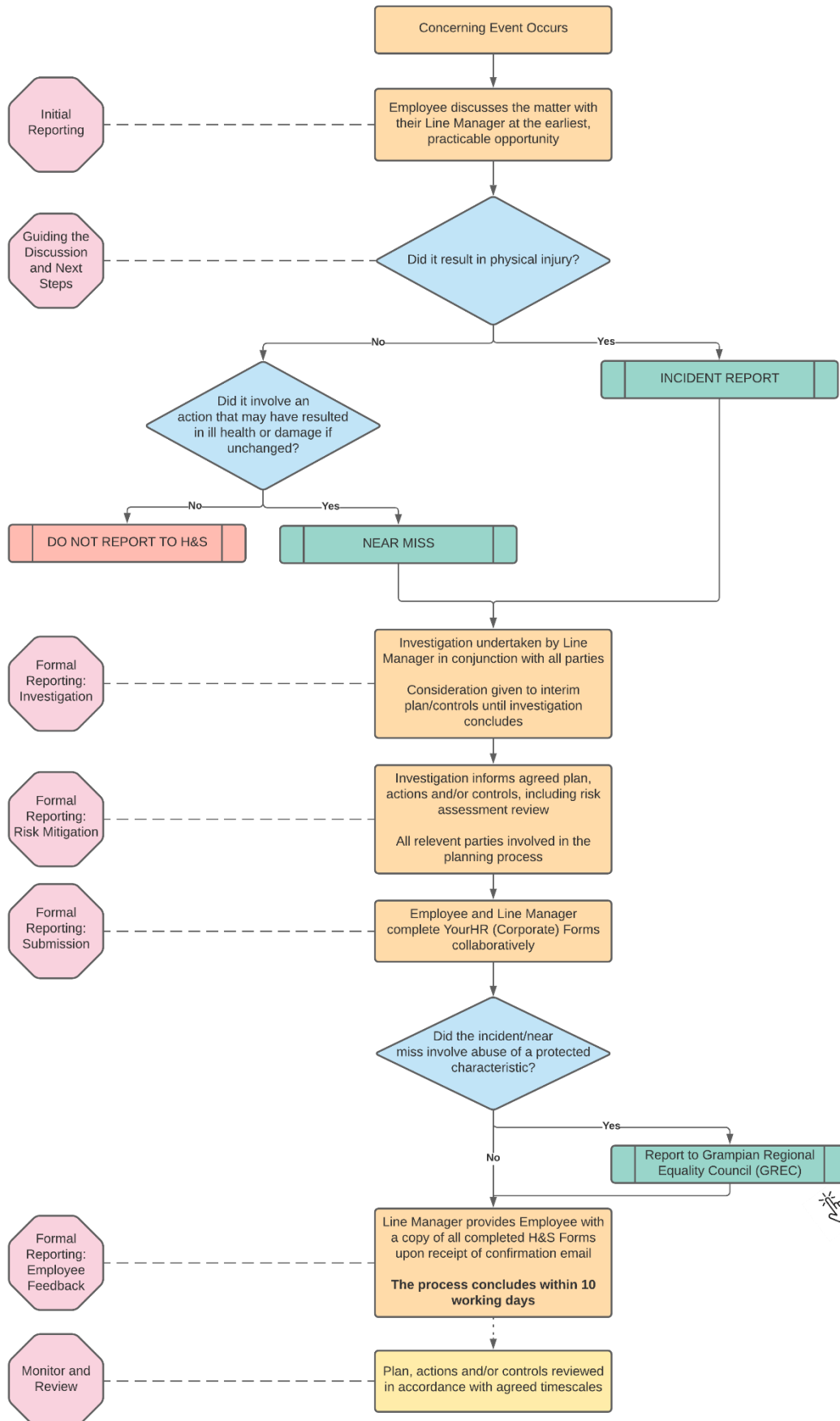


This pyramid does not mean that there will be a death every time that the other figures are reached but is more to show that every level should be treated with equal seriousness to prevent that risk. A process summary (flow) is presented overleaf.



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Aberdeen City Council
NEAR MISS AND INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS
V1.0 (January 2021)





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How to Report Incidents and Near Miss events

Both will normally be reported directly by the employee to their line manager. The line manager should meet with the employee(s) to discuss the circumstances of the incident or near miss and either complete the respective online reporting form on YourHR or take the details required to input into YourHR later. This meeting should be held at the earliest practicable opportunity and the report should be made on the system quickly after that, but within 7-10 days at most. The YourHR system will send an email to the line manager who inputs the report to confirm that this has been accepted by the system. This email should be shared with the employee as the first stage of feedback to show the report is being handled to close.

Colleagues, school pupils and third parties should be referred to anonymously e.g. the learner, the member of the public etc.

Practical or logistical issues may mean a colleague, other than the line manager, actually inputs the information into YourHR e.g. Administrator, Support Services Manager. In these instances, the confirmation email and .pdf files of the completed forms should be shared with the relevant line manager and employee for their records. This ensures the communication loop is always closed, thus concluding the near miss / incident reporting procedure.

'Grasping the Nettle'

It is important to remember that the incident and Near Miss reporting process is all about preventing accidents future near miss / incidents, and not about proportioning blame against an individual. We all have a moral duty to protect our colleagues and the public from harm and there is a legal duty under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 on all of us to report any hazardous safety concerns (see Appendix 1 for exemplification). Each time that an observer ignores or fails to report a Near Miss / Incident situation, the likelihood of a subsequent accident/significant injury increases.

Investigating Incident and Near Miss Reports

The reporting of an incident or near miss creates an investigation form and the investigation should then proceed in a prompt fashion, involving the originator of the report and any other relevant persons who have witnessed the incident, and an action plan prepared detailing 'who will do what & when'.

If further competent safety advice or guidance is required during the investigation stage, then the line manager should email the Corporate H & S team on HSW@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Learning Outcomes and Sharing Knowledge

When an Incident or Near Miss report has been investigated and corrective actions identified / implemented, the manager should ensure that the learning outcomes from the investigation are circulated to all employees involved in the directorate/service/activity.

Any relevant existing risk assessment should be updated, as necessary. The manager should then inform all employees identified in such risk assessments through briefings, safety meetings or via e-mail of any changes to the existing risk control measures. Any written 'safe systems of work', activity or work instructions should also be reviewed and updated if they are affected by the investigation final conclusions.

It is important that the employee who originated the report and concern is given feedback and a copy of the investigation report / documents, so they are aware of the final outcome.

Escalating an Employee Concern

Line management reporting structures should be used to escalate employee concerns about how and when investigation and risk mitigation stages are being progressed / undertaken or where there are concerns over the risk mitigation and outcomes. The senior line manager will support all parties to reach a mutually agreeable resolution



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using solution-focused principles e.g., the problem is the problem, not the person; minor changes can lead to bigger changes.

All employees have the right to seek advice from their trade union representative. If further support is required on suitability of the risk mitigation, then the corporate health and safety team can be contacted at hsw@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

It is the right of any citizen to involve Police Scotland in a near miss or an incident. Management will support an employee's decision in this regard.

Mandatory Training for Managers

All managers should complete the [ACC Learn](#) training modules *Introduction to Health & Safety and Safer Management*. It is the responsibility of each Cluster to ensure that every line manager completes this mandatory training.



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Appendix 1 – Incident and Near Miss Exemplification

Example Near Miss	Potential Incident	Remedial measures to consider preventing accident
a person trips and nearly falls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on an entrance mat in a building over a trailing electrical cable 	Fall injury resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broken wrist(s) Head injury Sprains or strains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are regular checks on mat condition / levelness done? Can cable be re-routed? If not, can it be covered?
a person slips and nearly falls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on a wet patch on a smooth floor in a kitchen or bathroom on walking in rainwater in a lobby or reception area 	Fall injury resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broken wrist(s) Head injury Sprains or strains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are spills being promptly dealt with as per procedure? Are floors being left wet after cleaning contrary to procedure? Are the door mats large enough to absorb rainwater ingress?
a person nearly falls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when standing on a chair to reach an item high above a cupboard when taking a shortcut across a rain-soaked grassy bank instead of using the designated access footpath from a ladder / stepladder whilst they were leaning out to reach something 	Fall injury resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broken wrist(s), arms, or legs Head injury Loss of consciousness Sprains or strains Fatal injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the need to store items in high places What access equipment is available to use? Are there sufficient barriers to prevent shortcuts? Is ladder training or refresher training required?
a person carrying a heavy object e.g., desktop computer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> drops it and the fall damages the outer casing / cover, but it is still in working order drops it and it narrowly misses their foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broken computer / loss of data Broken bones in foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What mechanical carrying equipment is available to use? Are safe manual handling procedures being followed?
a person needs to quickly step aside to avoid a reversing commercial vehicle	Truck hits person causing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fatal impact injuries Broken bones etc Crush injuries 	What are the arrangements for controlling reversing commercial & HGV vehicles on site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are they allowed in area? How are pedestrians segregated? Do they need someone to help them reverse safely; and is that person trained?
a person finds:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cuts to hand or fingers 	



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Example Near Miss	Potential Incident	Remedial measures to consider preventing accident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sharp knife in a bowl of water covered in soapsuds but does not get cut • a desk fan with the cover guard missing • someone smoking in the premises • someone struggling whilst carrying a heavy object over a distance • someone not wearing the designated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) whilst working • someone transferring hazardous chemicals – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a confined space that has poor ventilation • into inappropriate unmarked containers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stab injuries to hand • contact with blades causing injuries (if used) • risk of fire / loss of life • risk of musculoskeletal injuries / damage to object if dropped • injury to person that the PPE is designed to protect against • respiratory damage to user and others in area due to inadequate extraction • risk of inadvertent use or ingestion causing injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all staff aware of the procedures regarding knife controls? • Are arrangements in place to remove defective equipment? • Are No Smoking signs clearly displayed? • Are there mechanical aids available? • Consider reminder, training or if a repeat offender, discipline • Stop activity and arrange appropriate ventilation or extraction; give instruction and training to person • Stop activity; give instruction and training to person
<p>A child verbally abuses a member of schools' staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated verbal abuse causes ill health to staff and results in absence • Child eventually physically assaults or bites member of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process in place to prevent staff from repeated abuse.
<p>A parent or other adult verbally abuses a member of school staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent or adult physically assaults member of staff • Children see this verbal abuse and think it is acceptable to treat staff in this way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process in place to prevent repeat verbal abuse • Register of abusive adults kept reminding staff of required controls. • Staff don't meet adults in person where previous abuse has happened
<p>Contractor issues A contractor is seen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • throwing materials from an elevated platform or scaffold into a skip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact injuries to anyone walking near skip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tell contractor to instruct his employee and confirm the action in writing



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Example Near Miss	Potential Incident	Remedial measures to consider preventing accident
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• blocking emergency exit routes /doors without making alternative arrangements with management <p>parking vehicles that will obstruct access for Fire Service vehicles or crews in the event of a fire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• loss of life for anyone who is present in the building trapped by blocked route during a fire• delays in fighting fire leading to loss of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• review and update the fire risk assessment for the temporary work ensuring employees and non-employees are informed of alternative routes• is contractor aware of parking arrangements?• If repeated prevent the contractor's vehicles from using site, if possible



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Appendix 2 – Additional Considerations for the Education Service

Stage of Process	Point(s) for Consideration
<p>Reporting and Recording (General)</p>	<p>Each school has its own, unique ‘Promoting Positive Relationships’ (or similar) policy. This ACC-wide process sits, and must run parallel to, agreed school procedures, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use of SEEMiS Referrals to record and escalate learner wellbeing concerns. ▪ use of SEEMiS Pastoral Notes to maintain a learner’s chronology. ▪ use of SEEMiS Bullying & Equality.
<p style="text-align: center;">Investigation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>Investigation undertaken by Line Manager in conjunction with all parties</p> <p>Consideration given to interim plan/controls until investigation concludes</p> </div>	<p>Where the incident or near miss involves a staff-learner or learner-learner relationship, consideration must be given to both parties for the duration of the investigation process.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the learner/Do the learners need to learn out with, or in a different, class until the process is complete? Will period registration require to be re-coded to account for this e.g. SCH? ▪ Can restorative approaches be implemented sooner? ▪ Is a support plan required for break/lunch/social times? ▪ Are other classes affected by the incident/near miss (including consideration of any ‘please take’ asks)?
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Mitigation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>Investigation informs agreed plan, actions and/or controls</p> <p>All relevant parties involved in the planning process</p> </div>	<p>The ‘Potential Mitigations Menu’ provides a non-exhaustive, but extensive, list of possible controls/supports identified from learner risk assessments.</p> <p>Further reflection to support planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What gaps are evident following an assessment of wellbeing? ▪ Is further ‘ABC’ monitoring required before a plan can be finalised? ▪ Consider where and how the plan (actions, controls, intended outcomes, and monitoring period) is recorded: PCRA; IEP; Child’s Plan etc. ▪ Consider who needs access to the information to maximise intervention success. ▪ Consider immediate, follow-up/restorative actions.

Data Monitoring in the Education Service

The Supporting Learners health and safety sub-group (comprising of Corporate Health and Safety, Trade Union Representatives, and the Programme Manager) review near miss / incidents generated by the service monthly. Patterns and trends are fed back to Supporting Learners Work Group, Central Officers and – where appropriate – Head Teachers. This dataset forms part of the wider evidence base used to inform service planning and delivery.