



WORKER SAFETY & INCIDENT REPORTING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why bother reporting, nothing changes?

A: Reporting safety incidents and hazards is vital for the prevention of future incidents, the building of safer workplaces, and ensuring employer compliance with occupational safety regulations. Formal reporting fulfills a worker's due diligence and creates a written record of the incident or hazard that requires the employer to investigate and implement safety measures. Most importantly, reporting and investigation drives continuous improvement of workplace conditions to prevent future incidents through engaging workers in monitoring the effectiveness of safety controls. If the employer fails to implement actions that control workplace hazards the incident reports support escalation to WorkSafeBC and may show the employer is not complying with BC occupational safety requirements. Additionally, reporting data can show employers where to prioritize safety action or help assign additional organizational resources.

Q: I work at a health authority. For work incidents my supervisor says file a Patient Safety Learning System (PSLS) instead of calling the Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre (PWHCC) – Is that correct?

A: No. Workplace incidents or near miss events must follow the employer's reporting process. For example health authority employees report to the PWHCC 1-866-922-9463. This ensures an investigation occurs with the supervisor and Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) BCNU rep. If the patient is injured or their safety is a factor a PSLS report will be required.

Q: I work at an independent/affiliate care facility. Do I call the contact center to report?

A: No, workers at Independent and Affiliated facilities report incidents as per the employer reporting process.

Q: I work for an independent care facility, and I don't know how to report incidents or hazards.

A: Employers must educate all employees on incident and hazard reporting. This often occurs in employee orientation. Contact your supervisor for information (or a refresher) on how to report at your site.

Q: I was almost injured at work. What should I do? I don't want anyone else getting hurt.

A: Report the near miss as per employer process. E.g. to the Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre (PWHCC) 1-866-922-9463. An investigation will be conducted by your supervisor that consults with you, and the BCNU JOHSC rep and will identify actions to prevent future incidents.

Q: What should I do if I witnessed a traumatic event? Should I report it?

A: Yes. Exposure to traumatic events has the potential to develop into psychological injury. Witnessed events should be reported as a near miss, as per your employer's reporting process (e.g. Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre – PWHCC).

Q: During my incident investigation with my manager, I was blamed – is this allowed?

A: Workplace incident investigations are fact-finding processes and should not be blame-focused. The purpose is to identify contributing factors and implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence. You should not be disciplined for participating in health and safety activities. Workers have the right and responsibility to report unsafe conditions or incidents at work. Employers must identify hazards and educate workers on those hazards and safe work procedures, and when possible, employers must remedy unsafe conditions. If you experience any negative consequences from participating in safety activities such as reporting a workplace hazard, contact your union steward for support and healthandsafety@bcnu.org.

continued...



WORKER SAFETY & INCIDENT REPORTING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *(continued)*

- Q:** I told my supervisor about a violent incident involving a patient and followed up with an email, but no action has been taken.
- A:** Your supervisor is required to investigate any incidents or hazards that have been communicated to them. Documentation is essential to demonstrating your reporting due diligence. The best way to demonstrate reporting due diligence is to formally report as per the employer process. This ensures the employer is notified and prompts the investigation process with BCNU JOHSC rep support.
-
- Q:** When I call the Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre (PWHCC), no one answers, what should I do?
- A:** When you call to report a near miss or an incident and no one answers the call, leave a message with your contact details and the best time for you to receive a call back to report the details.
-
- Q:** I left a message with the Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre (PWHCC), and they called back when I was no longer on shift. Should I be paid for this time?
- A:** If the call is near the end of your shift and results in you staying late you are entitled to up to 14 minutes of paid end-of-shift work at straight time. If the return call is outside of your scheduled work hours, submit a payment request for the reporting time to your employer.
-
- Q:** I completed the employer incident report process, now what?
- A:** If you sustained a physical or psychological injury that resulted in medical treatment or lost time, contact WorkSafeBC and file a claim. Even if you do not require immediate compensation, having the injury documented can be beneficial if symptoms develop later.
-
- Q:** I have questions about my incident and WorkSafeBC claim status.
- A:** Incidents and WorkSafeBC claim coverage can be complex. The BCNU Illness and Disability Services webpages may help with frequently asked questions and your regional Enhanced Disability Management Representative is a great contact for more information and assistance. To look up your EDMP representative, log in to the BCNU Member Portal. Your EDMP representative is found under the 'Contacts' tab.
-
- Q:** While working I was exposed to smoke from an illicit substance and experienced symptoms requiring medical treatment. Is this a workplace incident?
- A:** Yes. If you experience symptoms, you had a potential exposure, and the incident must be reported as per your employer process. Any workplace task that places you in contact with people using non-prescribed substances, without exposure controls and the required personal protective equipment, even if you do not develop symptoms is a reportable incident/near miss. Health Authority employees should call the Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre (PWHCC) at 1-866-922-9463.
-
- Q:** After my exposure to non-prescribed substances, I received medical treatment and could not return to my shift – are there any additional steps I should take?
- A:** Yes. File a WorkSafeBC claim, call 1-888-967-5377 for any incident involving medical treatment and/or lost time from work. Additionally, the long-term effects of drug and chemical exposures are unknown. Register the exposure with WorkSafeBC's Exposure Registry Program form (Form 41M1). This ensures future eligibility for compensation should you develop an occupational disease related to past exposure events.