Hazard Reporting

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PURPOSE
This document sets out steps for reporting potential or actual hazards in the workplace, including workplace accidents, incidents, occupational illnesses or near misses. As such, it provides information on the content of the report itself, helping to streamline the approach for
- Advising authorities of hazards and receiving feedback on the action taken,
- Investigating accidents, incidents, occupational illnesses, near misses or concerns, and
- Determining the best control measures.

SCOPE
This hazard reporting procedure is applicable to the entire University of Ottawa community, in particular by workers and supervisors. Refer to Procedure 14-1 - Internal Responsibility Procedure for Health and Safety Issues for additional information.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Reporting hazards
The individual who identifies the hazard must report it clearly and expeditiously to the appropriate University authority (e.g. supervisor, Protection Services, Facilities or other designated university authority). Individuals detecting a “high-risk hazard” or “critical injury” must contact Protection Services at ext. 5411 immediately.

Controlling reported hazards
The responsibility for properly controlling and containing reported workplace hazards in a timely fashion belongs to the appropriate university authority, who must also inform the original reporter of the action taken and the results obtained.

DEFINITIONS

Accident – means an unexpected event causing injury, illness or even death (see also critical injury), or involving a person’s exposure to harmful substances.

Building Management Agent (BMA) – a person to whom Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committees (FOHSCs), the University Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (UJOHSC) and building occupants report problems or health and safety matters concerning that building. BMAs are designated by Management for each building in which the University of Ottawa operates. Management will also designate a person to whom FOHSCs or the UJOHSC are to submit reports of problems concerning several buildings or campus areas outside of buildings.

Building-related issues – situations that involve the maintenance, the structure or the operation of a building (light replacement, asbestos removal, mould growth, air quality concern, comfort level, etc.).

Critical injury – an injury of a serious nature that:
   a) places life in jeopardy;
   b) produces unconsciousness;
   c) results in substantial loss of blood;
   d) involves a fracture of a leg, arm, but not a finger or toe;
   e) involves the amputation of a leg, an arm, a hand or a foot, but not a finger or toe
   f) consists of burns to a major part of the body; or
g) causes the loss of sight in an eye.

Hazard – a substance or situation that can cause injury or illness, damage to property, damage to the workplace environment, or any combination of these.

Health and Wellness – means the Health and Wellness sector of Human Resources

High-risk hazard – a substance or situation whose potential for causing injury or illness, damage to property and damage to the workplace environment is especially acute.

Incident – means an undesired event resulting in damage to property or the environment, for example, a fire, spill, or breakage of material.

Near miss – a situation that could have led to an injury, to illness or to property damage.

Occupational illness – means a condition that results from exposure in a workplace to a physical, chemical or biological agent to the extent that normal physiological mechanisms are affected and the health of the worker is impaired. It includes an occupational disease for which a worker is entitled to benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Office of Risk Management (ORM) – means the University Office of Risk Management

Physical hazard and/or non-conformance – any deviations from work standards, practices, procedures, regulations, or from management system requirements that can directly or indirectly lead to injury or illness, to property damage, to environmental damage or to a combination of these (includes near misses—see above).

Risk – a situation that results in a chance of harm to people, of damage to property or of other loss; or the potential for such a situation occurring.

Risk Level – an assessment, usually subjective, which estimates the magnitude of the risk based on the probability of the event occurring and the estimated severity of the impact.

Student – means a person who is registered in a course or program of study at the University and who is not receiving remuneration for services.

Supervisor – means a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker or another person. Depending on the workplace relationship, a supervisor may include, for example, the president, vice-presidents, directors, deans, managers or principle investigators. The determination as to whether a person is a supervisor does not depend on that person’s job title. It depends on whether the person is responsible for a location (for example, an office or laboratory) where the work is performed on a paid or unpaid basis or whether the person gives direction to complete the work performed by workers, students, visitors, volunteers or learners.

FOHSC – Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committee
Worker – means any of the following, but does not include an inmate of a correctional institution or like institution or facility who participates inside the institution or facility in a work project or rehabilitation program:
1. A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation.
2. A secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled.
3. A person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university or other post-secondary institution.
4. Such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation.

REPORTING PROCEDURE
Note: the Office of Risk Management can be consulted at any stage of this procedure.

If you are a worker
1. Report hazards to your supervisor, unless there is an immediate threat to life, safety, property or the environment, in which case you must call Protection Services at ext. 5411 or 911. For physical hazards that you detect in public areas of the University (such as exterior grounds, hallways, etc.), you can contact the Building Management Agent or Facilities directly at 2222, unless your supervisor has instructed you otherwise.
   • You may report non-urgent hazards orally or in writing to your supervisor.
   • For written reports, use e-mail or the Hazard Report Form (Appendix 1).
   • For hazards requiring immediate attention, provide immediate oral notice, followed by written report, when needed.
   • In case of a personal threat or workplace violence, consult and follow Policy 66 – Violence Prevention.
   • In case of harassment, consult and follow Policy 67a – Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination.
   • In the event that the situation is resolved without your supervisor's involvement, be sure to inform him / her about the hazard and the action taken, especially if the area involved is under the supervisor's direct responsibility.

2. If you are not satisfied with the supervisor's follow-up, raise the matter again or ask your functional occupational health and safety committee (FOHSC) for assistance. If you approach the FOHSC:
   • Document your concerns using the Hazard Report Form.
   • The FOHSC may investigate and recommend corrective action to the supervisor.
   • The FOHSC and the supervisor must ensure that workers are informed about how the hazard is being, or has been, resolved.

Note: This procedure does not prevent you, the worker, from exercising your right to refuse unsafe work, as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). Under the OHSA, you cannot be subject to reprisals for exercising this right.

For an illustration of the reporting steps, consult the Health and Safety Hazard-Reporting Flow Chart.
If you are a supervisor

1. **In the event of a non-critical accident or injury**, ensure that the worker receives first aid or appropriate advice.

For critical injuries:

- **Advise Protection Services (ext. 5411) or 911 immediately.** Protection Services will then contact the Office of Risk Management. The Office of Risk Management will notify the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development without delay.
- **Do not** disturb the scene of the accident until an Inspector from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development instructs the University of Ottawa to do so, except to:
  - Save a life or relieve human suffering,
  - Maintain an essential public utility or transportation system, or
  - Prevent unnecessary damage to equipment or other property.

2. **Report all accidents, incidents, occupational illnesses or near misses** on the internal accident, incident, near miss or occupational illness report form. Submit the form to the Health and Wellness office within 24 hours.

3. **Properly investigate** all accidents, incidents, concerns, threats, building-related hazards, physical hazards or non-conformances reported to you orally or in writing. To ensure proper follow-up for the situation in question, consult the Health and Safety Flow Chart for Supervisors in this document. Consult the Supervisor Accident / Incident Investigation program for more information.

   In the event of a personal threat or workplace violence, consult and follow Policy 66 – Violence Prevention.

   In the event of harassment, consult and follow Policy 67a – Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination.

4. In the event of a work refusal, follow the work-refusal flowchart (Appendix 2).

   The investigation or follow-up is crucial in helping to determine which corrective or preventive actions are put in place to avoid further injury, potential damage or reoccurrence. This can include communication and joint efforts with other units, such as Facilities, Building Management Agents, the Health and Wellness Office and the Office of Risk Management.

5. **Act on workers’ concerns as soon as possible.** Your action could:
   - Resolve the concern;
   - Set a timetable for resolving the concern;
   - Confirm that steps have been taken to resolve the concern (ex. Facilities have been notified and action is in progress);
   - Schedule time to discuss the concern with workers in more detail.
   - Etc.
6. Set and follow a schedule for resolving the concern, and assess the risk level of the hazard to decide exactly how tight or flexible that schedule should be. For instance, high-level risks call for immediate resolution or mitigation means to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Finally, consider that:
- Progress reports or schedules for resolving the concern are required within 21 calendar days if the concern cannot be resolved earlier than that;
- If you submit a schedule but have to deviate from it, you must brief workers accordingly;
- If you do not have a timetable, you must provide a progress report at least monthly.

For an illustration of these steps and thus how to ensure proper follow-up, consult the *Health and Safety Hazard-Reporting Flow Chart for Supervisors* (non-emergencies).
**TYPES OF HAZARDS**

**Physical**
Conditions in which objects, materials or structures can cause material or bodily damage. Examples include flammability, explosiveness, noise, electric shock, heat and cold extremes, radiation, slippery surfaces, low ceilings, etc.

**Chemical**
Conditions that can lead to contamination by harmful or potentially harmful substances. Examples include toxic gases, noxious fumes, corrosive liquids or powders, etc.

**Biomechanical**
Conditions that give workers biomechanical stress (body and movement). Examples include workbench height, chair design, workstation set-up, etc.

**Psychosocial**
Conditions that can affect the thoughts, behavior and mental well-being of workers. Examples include stress from using equipment without proper training or instruction or from being coerced into using defective tools or materials; burn-out or depression from constant exposure to high-tension situations, etc.

**Biological**
Conditions where living organisms can pose a threat to human health. Examples include syringes carrying potentially infected blood, specimen containers with potentially infected materials, viruses from air-conditioning systems, etc.

**HAZARD CONTROLS**
Hazards can be controlled:
- At their very source,
- Along the path between them and the worker, or
- At the worker.

The first priority is to eliminate the hazard from the work process entirely, or to control it at its source. Controlling the hazard before it reaches the worker is the next best method. Control at the worker is used when the hazard cannot be eliminated or otherwise blocked. There are four main types of control.

**Engineering Control**
This can be equipment, materials, designs or processes that reduce the risk at the source and thus control worker exposure to the hazard without relying on the worker to take self-protective action. Examples include changing the handle angle of a tool, using a lighter weight part, installing a fume hood or guard, etc.

**Administrative Control**
This refers to how work in general or specific operations are organized. Included are arrangements like job rotation and relief procedures to allow workers time away from certain work or hazards. These arrangements limit exposure to designated substances and other hazardous agents when other controls are not effective.
Practices and Procedures
This refers to workplace processes and activities that have proven to be the safest and most effective; including good hygiene.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
This means clothing and personal items or accessories that either provide additional protection, or provide primary protection when engineering controls are being repaired or installed and when other controls are not feasible. PPE needs to be fitted individually, and workers have to be trained in its use, limitations, storage and maintenance. For further information, consult the Personal Protective Equipment Guidelines from the Office of Risk Management.

ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT INVESTIGATION
Management intervention can prevent most accidents and incidents. However, when they do occur, accidents and incidents provide critical opportunities to learn from mistakes, hence the importance of thorough investigations that establish both what happened and why. Ultimately, investigations are the key to identifying and controlling hazards and to preventing the recurrence of accidents or incidents.

The Office of Risk Management has developed a Supervisor Accident/Incident Investigation program to assist the university community in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.
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