

Morgan Support Services

Identifying and Reporting Critical Incidents

What is an incident?

An incident is anything that happens that is outside of the normal realm of what usually happens and that has caused harm to someone or something, or that has the potential to cause harm to someone or something. “Harm” doesn’t have to mean an injury. It may be that it makes someone upset. It could be that it interferes with someone’s progress. Maybe it makes the agency look bad in the eyes of the public. And the harm doesn’t have to be immediate or certain. If there is a medication error, for instance, it could be that the effect is delayed or there is no effect at all – but it’s still considered to be an incident that needs to be reported.

The general incident categories that we recognize are as follows:

- Possible Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation
- Possible Rights Violation
- Verbal Aggression/Threats
- Property Destruction
- Violent/Threatening Situation involving a Person we Support
- Self-Injurious Behavior
- Trip/Fall
- Accident (other than trip/fall)
- Injury
- Medical Concern/Illness
- Injury noted or reported from a time when the person was NOT under MSS supervision
- Elopement/Attempted Elopement
- Suicidal Comments/Gestures
- Medication Error
- Violent/Threatening Situation NOT involving a person we support
- Fire
- Bomb Threat
- Natural Disaster
- Utility Failure
- Other

As you can see, not all incidents are directly related to something someone has done. Any of these categories has the potential to cause harm to a person we support, a person we employ, a person within the community, a building or home, a possession, and/or the reputation of the agency.

Regarding the “other” category: Don’t get into the habit of being lazy and choosing “other” rather than figuring out what category of incident you’re reporting. We are required to analyze these incidents quarterly and annually, and having things in the “other” category doesn’t always make sense. If a meteor strikes your car, that’s both accident and natural disaster. If a clown in a big red hat scares someone and they fall backwards and get a bump on the head, that’s a trip/fall and an injury. If an alien spacecraft abducts the person with whom you’re working, I’d say that falls in the “other” category. But please consider all available categories before choosing “other.”

Please ask your supervisor if you have any questions regarding what each of these categories involves. You can ask now, or you can ask at the time that you’re completing an incident report. It’s better to ask questions and be accurate the first time than to have to make corrections later down the line.

To read specific information about each incident category, go to this link:

<https://mssconfidential.online/IncidentCategories>

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Why do we report incidents?

The first thing that you need to know is that reporting an incident is NOT the same as making an entry into the clinical record. The incident report is about the Incident, not about the Person. Any time an incident report is completed, there should also be a record made in the clinical file of any people we support who are involved in the incident. How, when, and by whom that report is made depends on several factors, so be sure to find out from your supervisor what your role in that process may be.

So why do we report incidents? The rules that govern our operations state that timely reporting is required to make sure that any adverse events involving the folks we support are addressed in a timely manner. Some of them, Level I incidents, only get reported within our internal system. Level II and Level III incidents, the more serious ones, get reported to the MCOs. You don't have to worry about those classifications, but if you do want to have more information about the different levels of incidents, you can ask your supervisor for more information or you can read about it here:

<https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/documents/files/incidentmanual2-25-11.pdf>

Another reason for reporting incidents is so that we as an agency can look to see where there might be room for us to improve what we do and how we do it. By analyzing incidents, we can work to improve our services and to prevent future occurrences. If we note that there are a bunch of trip/fall incidents in a certain part of the building, for instance, we can see if there is a structural change that needs to be made. If we see that there are a lot of a certain type of incident, it could be that we need to beef up staff training in how to avoid that type of incident. We might note that there are more of a certain type of incident occurring at a certain time of day, in which case we may need to look at our programming schedule or staffing patterns. There are all sorts of ways in which incident report analysis can help the agency to improve the safety and the satisfaction of the folks we support as well as the folks we employ.

How do we report incidents?

At present MSS is using a DocuSign template for reporting incidents. You need to report all incidents as soon as possible, because there are time limits on when we have to report some incidents to the MCO. In some cases, we have a lot of different contacts that we have to make in a short period of time, so if you delay submission of the incident report, that puts the whole agency behind on its schedule. It is important that you complete the report as soon as possible, preferably immediately or at least before your shift is over that day. If there is some situation that is causing you a delay in completing the report, talk to your supervisor or another leadership staff member for assistance.

Who is required to complete an incident report?

All staff need to be able to complete a report. Anyone who witnesses or is told about possible abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a person we support is required to complete an incident report regardless of how many other people may also be completing a similar report. You need to complete an incident report if you are the only staff person present when the incident occurs. If multiple staff are involved or witness the event, you can decide among yourselves who will fill out the incident report. A separate incident report must be filled out for every person we support who is involved in the incident, so it is possible that multiple staff will be filling out separate incident reports about the same event.

The DocuSign incident report template can be found at this link:

<https://mssconfidential.online/incidentreport>

To read details about how to complete the DocuSign incident report format, go to this link:

<https://mssconfidential.online/HowToCompleteAnIncidentReport>

Take the quiz to demonstrate your knowledge of identifying and reporting critical incidents here:

<https://mssconfidential.online/Incident-Identification-and-Reporting-Quiz>