



# Recording incidents in an incident management system

## Serious Incident Response Scheme

A fact sheet for providers of residential care and flexible care in a residential aged care setting

**The Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) is a new initiative to help prevent and reduce the risk of incidents of abuse and neglect in residential aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.**

The SIRS requires residential services to have an effective incident management system or IMS. An IMS is key to a provider's ability to effectively identify, respond to, and mitigate the impact of an incident, and enables providers to analyse and identify risks and trends to inform preventative measures.

This fact sheet describes how incidents should be recorded in your IMS to meet your obligations under SIRS and provide safe care to your residents.

### What must be recorded in an IMS?

Incidents are any acts, omissions, events or circumstances that occur in connection with the provision of care and services to a consumer that have, or could reasonably be expected to have, caused harm to a consumer or another person (such as a staff member or visitor to the service). Incidents also include any acts, omissions, events or circumstances that the provider becomes aware of in connection with the provision of care that have caused harm to a consumer.

This includes incidents that:

- are known, alleged or suspected to have occurred, including those that involve a consumer who is cognitively impaired
- have affected anyone at the service, including consumers, staff members, visitors or others
- relate to the delivery of care and services to consumers, even if they occur in the community (such as when staff are taking consumers to appointments or supporting consumers to do their shopping)
- are reportable under the SIRS.

**All incidents that relate to the delivery of care and services should be recorded in your incident management system.**

### How should records be kept in an IMS?

A core part of your incident management system is the mechanism for recording, storing and easily accessing information about specific incidents. Aged care providers use different systems for recording incidents; some might be part of larger risk or quality management software programs, some might use an Excel spreadsheet, and some might be paper-based.

The recording tool in your incident management system should:

- reflect the characteristics of your service, including its size and the services you provide
- be easy to use by staff who are recording incidents
- keep together documentation on an incident, for example incident records and related correspondence
- enable you to review and analyse incidents to identify recurrent issues and patterns to inform preventative actions
- support continuous improvement, management and prevention of incidents
- support the notification of reportable incidents to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and be made available on request to the Commission
- be supported by documented policies and procedures.

### **What information should be recorded about each incident?**

No matter which system you use, your IMS should support your staff to record key details in relation to each incident. By collecting all the information in the table on page 3 you will also have all the details required to notify the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission about a reportable incident.

### **When should staff record incidents?**

All incidents should be recorded in your IMS as soon as possible. Staff will require initial training in how and when to use the IMS and ongoing reinforcement of this knowledge.

In addition to their initial recording of the incident, staff should update records when:

- new information becomes available
- notifications are made to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, police or other agencies (such as the NDIS)
- actions are taken to manage or resolve the incident

- there are outcomes to the assessment or investigation into the incident
- remedial action is taken.

### **How long should records relating to incidents be kept?**

Incident records must be kept for seven years after the date the incident was identified.

### **What quality assurance steps should be taken?**

The IMS requirements are more than a set of minimum obligations. An effective IMS will help to manage risks inherent in your service.

It is in a provider's best interest to adopt a rigorous quality assurance program to ensure the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of recorded information.

### **What are the privacy and the security requirements for records relating to incidents?**

You must maintain appropriate controls in relation to the privacy and confidentiality of information, particularly where it relates to consumers. This includes ensuring that personal and sensitive information, including incident reports, are securely stored and that privacy and confidentiality are maintained when reports are required to be shared (both within the service and to other parties such as the Commission or police).

You will also need to consider requirements to use a notice of collection when gathering and recording personal or sensitive information in relation to any person affected by an incident.

Section 62-1 of the Aged Care Act sets out your responsibilities in relation to the protection of personal information relating to consumers. These responsibilities apply alongside regulatory requirements in relation to privacy contained in relevant state, territory or Commonwealth legislation, such as the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

## Details to be recorded for each incident

| Subject                                      | Details   |
|--|---|
| <b>Details of the incident or allegation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The name and contact details of the person recording the incident or near miss</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The name and contact details of the person making the allegation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The time and date when an incident or near miss was identified/reported</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The time, date and place at which the incident or near miss occurred (or was alleged or suspected to have occurred), where this is known</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether a death has occurred as a result of the incident</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether the incident is a reportable incident and if so, the type of incident (to assist in identifying patterns or common occurrences)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A description of the incident or near miss, including the harm caused (or that could reasonably have been expected to have been caused) to each person affected by the incident and the consequences of that harm (if known)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>People involved in the incident</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details of the persons directly involved, including names, contact details and cognitive status</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether the alleged perpetrator is an aged care recipient, and if not, their relationship to the service</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether the victim or alleged perpetrator have been involved in any prior incidents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether the victim or alleged perpetrator suffered any psychological or physical impact and if so, the level of impact</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether the victim resides within a secure unit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The names and contact details of any witnesses</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Response to the incident</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details of the actions undertaken in response to the incident, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the incident has been reported to the police and if so, when and how the police were contacted</li> <li>• The action taken by the police, including whether a person has been arrested or charged</li> <li>• Whether the victim or alleged perpetrator's next of kin or enduring power of attorney has been notified</li> <li>• Whether the person's next of kin or enduring power of attorney has ongoing concerns about the management of the incident</li> <li>• The actions (support or assistance) taken to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the care recipients involved</li> <li>• Details of any actions undertaken to prevent further similar incidents from occurring, or to minimise their harm</li> <li>• Any consultation with those affected by the incident (and/or their representatives) in the management and resolution of the issue and any findings/outcomes they have been provided</li> <li>• Any notifications made to the Commission, police, and other relevant organisations</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Investigation and analysis</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details of any investigation/analysis undertaken to identify the cause or source of an incident</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The outcomes of any investigation or analysis undertaken (including whether the incident could have been prevented)</li> </ul>  |

### How can I find out more about the SIRS?

For more information and resources on the SIRS, including further fact sheets, visit [agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs](https://agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs)