



# Reportable incidents and SIRS

## A quick guide to changes from 1 Nov 2025

### Overview

The *Aged Care Act 2024* (Aged Care Act) and the Aged Care Rules 2025, which started on 1 November 2025, introduced changes to reportable incidents through the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS).

The key changes are:

- updating the definition of a Priority 1 incident by:
  - removing the wording ‘could reasonably have been expected to have caused’
  - making sure providers understand that a person who can’t communicate how a serious incident has affected them may still have been affected
  - explaining what is meant by ‘medical or psychological treatment’
- changing the definition of the reportable incident type, neglect
- combining unexplained absence (residential care) and missing person (home services) incident types
- changing the terms we use to match what is in the new Aged Care Act.

### Priority 1 reportable incidents

The change removes the phrase ‘could reasonably have been expected to have caused’ from the definition for a Priority 1 reportable incident.

This means that providers don’t have to predict ‘potential’ or ‘worst-case’ impacts of incidents when deciding on the timeframe for reporting a serious incident. Instead, it is expected providers take a person-centred, culturally informed and trauma informed approach to assessing the physical or psychological injury and discomfort from an incident.

## Priority 1 and 2 definitions and reporting timeframes

Priority	New definition
<b>Priority 1</b>	<p>A Priority 1 reportable incident is any reportable incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• that <b>has caused</b> an older person physical or psychological injury or discomfort that requires medical or psychological treatment to resolve; or</li><li>• where there are reasonable grounds to report the incident to the police; or</li><li>• involving unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct inflicted on an older person; or</li><li>• involving unexpected death of the older person resulting from care services delivered (or a failure to be delivered) by the provider; or</li><li>• involving unexplained absence of the older person during the delivery of aged care services where there are reasonable grounds to call police.</li></ul> <p>You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• report Priority 1 incidents to the Commission within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident</li><li>• provide any information not available at that time to the Commission within the following 5 days.</li></ul>
<b>Priority 2</b>	<p>A Priority 2 reportable incident is any reportable incident that does not meet the criteria for a Priority 1 reportable incident, including any incident, allegation or suspicion that could reasonably have been expected to have caused harm to an older person receiving aged care services.</p> <p>You must report Priority 2 incidents to the Commission within 30 calendar days of becoming aware of the incident.</p>

You must also notify the Commission of any significant new information about a reported incident as soon as reasonably practical after becoming aware of the information.

## Assessing how a person has been affected

When assessing if an incident has caused physical or psychological injury, providers need to understand that a person who can't communicate how a serious incident has affected them may still have been affected. You need to assess the impact on the person even if they can't communicate it.

For example, if a person with a cognitive impairment can't remember the incident it doesn't mean there's been no psychological impact. Your assessment should consider if the person's behaviour has changed. For example, have they become withdrawn, or fearful of certain types of care or people? You may have to do this assessment over a period of time. Not all impacts will be obvious straight away.

To help you assess the impact an incident has had on an older person, we've developed an [Impact Assessment Tool](#). This tool encourages you to think about the different impacts an incident could have on an older person by walking in their shoes.

## Medical and psychological treatment

The definition for medical and psychological treatment has changed.

You must categorise an incident as Priority 1 if it leads to a person needing medical and psychological treatment that **only** a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, psychologist or social worker can provide.

For incidents where a person needs general treatment that anyone can provide, you don't need to categorise them as Priority 1, unless any of the other criteria apply.

## Reportable incident type, neglect

The definition of neglect as a reportable incident type has changed.

A reportable incident of neglect is when a registered provider, aged care worker or responsible person has:

- delivered aged care services that exposes the older person to risk of serious injury or illness; or
- been reckless or intentionally negligent in delivering aged care services to the older person; or
- caused or contributed (including through reckless or intentional behaviour) to:
  - a significant failure to deliver aged care services to the older person, or
  - a systemic (repeated or ongoing) pattern of poor conduct; or
- delivered a grossly inadequate aged care service to the older person.

You can find more information about neglect as a reportable incident, and your responsibilities in our [neglect fact sheet](#).

## Unexplained absence (missing consumer)

The 'missing consumer' incident type for services provided in home or community settings and 'unexplained absence' incident type for residential care homes have been merged. Use 'unexplained absence' instead of 'missing consumer' for all settings.

# Changes in language

Previous terms	New terms from 1 November 2025
consumer or person	individual; or older person or older people
family or carers	supporters
approved provider or service provider	registered provider (provider)
governing persons	responsible persons
workers or staff	aged care workers (workers)
care and services	funded aged care services (aged care services)
residential services or residential care services	residential care homes
home care services	services in home or community settings
missing consumer	unexplained absence
responsibilities	obligations

The information in this fact sheet provides general guidance only. It’s your responsibility to know your obligations and legal responsibilities under the [Aged Care Act](#) and the [Aged Care Rules](#).

All information in this publication is correct as of 1 November 2025.



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