



Volunteers in aged care

Serious Incident Response Scheme



A fact sheet for volunteers in aged care

The Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) helps prevent and reduce the risk of incidents of abuse and neglect in aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) is the national regulator of aged care services in Australia. Our purpose is to protect and enhance the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life of people receiving Australian government funded aged care and services.

We do this by granting approvals for providers to deliver aged care services, monitoring aged care services performance and compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards, complaints handling, overseeing approved providers, their workers and volunteers' behaviour with the Code of Conduct for Aged Care, and managing the Serious Incident Response Scheme, also known as the SIRS.

The SIRS helps reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for older people who receive aged care.

Under the SIRS, providers must manage and take reasonable action to prevent incidents with a focus on the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life for older Australians. Aged care providers must also notify the Commission when reportable incidents happen in their service.

Your volunteer manager can help you understand how to report an incident that happens in your service.

If you become aware of an incident in aged care, you should:

- make sure everyone is safe and call for help if needed
- follow your services' policies and procedures for incident management
- tell your manager as soon as you become aware
- support the older person to understand who they can reach out to, such as:
 - a staff member at your service,
 - the Commission, or
 - an advocacy service such as the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN).

Everyone in aged care has the right to feel safe. Let's stay safe together.

There are 8 types of reportable incidents involving older Australians that must be reported to the Commission.

8 types of incidents that are reportable are:	Some examples
1. Unreasonable use of force	Hitting, pushing, shoving, or rough handling.
2. Sexual contact or inappropriate sexual touching	Sexual assault, stalking, making sexual advances or unwanted sexual touching.
3. Psychological or emotional abuse	Yelling, name calling, ignoring, threatening gestures, or refusing access to care or services as a means of punishment.
4. Unexpected death	Reasonable steps weren't taken by the provider to prevent a death, the death is the result of care or services provided by the provider or a failure by the provider to provide care and services.
5. Stealing or financial coercion by a staff member	Coercion of a older person to change their will to their advantage or steals valuables from a older person.
6. Neglect	Withholding personal care, untreated wounds, or insufficient assistance during meals.
7. Inappropriate use of restrictive practices	Restraining or using a sedative medication to control behaviour in a way that is not consistent with legislation.
8. Unexplained absence from care/ missing person	When a resident in residential care goes missing without explanation and there are reasonable grounds to contact the police. Or an older Australian goes missing while care or services are being provided, and there are reasonable grounds to report that fact to the police.

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Write

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