

Incident reporting by registered housing agencies

This information has been developed to provide an overview for registered agencies of their incident reporting obligations to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Housing Registrar.

Are registered housing agencies required to report incidents?

Registered housing agencies are required to report on relevant incidents occurring within homelessness assistance, family violence, transitional housing, long term community housing, and affordable housing services and properties they deliver and/or manage (including those they directly own).

Further information on requirements is available within the DHS [Critical client incident management instruction](#) published in February 2012.

What types of incidents should be reported on?

The DHS instruction provides advice about the types of incidents to be reported. There are two categories of incidents, and types include incidents involving death, serious injury, fire, assault of staff or client, threatening behaviour, and allegations of criminal behaviour.

To whom are incidents reported?

Incidents are formally reported using a specific template (the Incident Report Form) faxed to the designated DHS regional office within the region in which the incident has occurred. Once received, copies of the forms are forwarded to any other relevant parties by the DHS regional office. The Regional Office also has responsibility for briefing the Minister for Housing, and senior DHS / Housing staff where appropriate.

The information required on a Incident Report Form can take some time to collect and finalise. Hence registered housing agencies are requested to verbally advise key contact staff within DHS/Housing as soon as practicable where an incident is very serious incident and/or one with potential for media coverage.

Should registered agencies also contact the Housing Registrar directly to advise of incidents?

Registered housing agencies are not expected to contact and provide a copy of the incident report to the Housing Registrar except where the incident:

- *has had a serious impact on your whole organisation (or a significant part of it) AND/OR*
- *is attracting media attention and may be reported in the press or on television*

For these incidents, agencies are requested to contact the Housing Registrar through their lead regulator or a Housing Registrar senior manager as soon as practicable after dealing with the incident and submitting their incident report to DHS.

What does the Housing Registrar do with copies of Incident Reports that are forwarded to it?

A copy of the any incident report provided to the Housing Registrar is placed on an agency file.

In some cases, the Housing Registrar also obtains copies of any briefings drafted by DHS regional offices, and may provide input where requested and appropriate to the preparation of the briefing.

Will the Housing Registrar seek information/enter into discussions about incidents with agencies independently of DHS regional offices?

Where appropriate, the Housing Registrar may have further discussions with a registered agency independently of the DHS regional office after the incident has been initially followed up by the DHS regional office within the described incident reporting process.

This may be to gain a better understanding of why an incident occurred and/or the agency's response to and management of the incident. The Housing Registrar may also explore with the agency how to reduce the likelihood of such an incident occurring again.

Why are registered agencies required to report on incidents even when they occur in properties in which the Director of Housing has not invested funding?

The reporting of serious incidents to the Victorian Government builds on existing, established processes and ensures that this key stakeholder in affordable housing is also informed of significant issues within the social housing sector that government and/or the regulator may need to address along with the sector.

This guide does not constitute legal advice. It is intended to offer general guidance only to assist registered agencies understand their obligations in the context of registration and regulation.