

## ADVICE SHEET 5

# Reporting bullying

### Why have bullying reporting procedures?

Bullying reporting procedures are not only helpful for identifying bullying incidents. They can also play an important role in identifying risky behaviour and analysing bullying trends which, together, can help prevent bullying from recurring.

<p><b>Where the red zone is ticked...</b></p>	<p>The PCBU is unlikely to have a system for managing and resolving bullying complaints and provide a guide on prevention strategies.</p>
<p>Notify WorkCover on <b>13 10 50</b> of significant incidents including bullying or where serious injury is reported.</p>	<p>Ticks in the <b>red</b> zone indicate that there needs to be immediate action taken to ensure that bullying incidents (and any injuries) are reported to those who need to know about them – managers, supervisors, scheme agents, WorkCover – so that problems can be identified and recorded, and action taken to prevent their recurrence.</p>
<p>PCBUs must have a register of injuries that enables workers to record any workplace injuries they sustain whilst at work. A register can be obtained from the PCBU's Scheme Agent.</p>	<p><b>Involve workers in the development of bullying reporting procedures.</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what matters/incidents to report – eg bullying behaviours, assaults</li> <li>• how to report them – a bullying reporting procedures should specify the person who will have the authority to address a complaint (eg manager or supervisor).</li> </ul>
<p>PCBUs must have a register of injuries that allows workers to record any workplace injuries they sustain while at work. A register can be obtained from the organisation's scheme agent.</p>	<p>Many bullying incidents may be able to be managed informally; however, a record should be made of all meetings and interviews detailing who was present and the agreed outcome.</p> <p>In situations where there is a risk of significant injury caused by bullying behaviour, a formal investigation may be necessary.</p> <p>It is advised that a record be made of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the person who made the report</li> <li>• when the report was made</li> <li>• to whom the report was made</li> <li>• the nature of the problem</li> <li>• action taken to resolve he problem</li> <li>• any further action that's required – what, when and by whom.</li> </ul>

<p>Report workplace injuries to scheme agent within 48 hours if workers compensation is or is likely to be paid.</p>	<p><b>Implement a bullying reporting procedure.</b></p> <p>Successful bullying reporting procedures depend on workers – they must be prepared to use them. The successful resolution of bullying complaints depends on management.</p> <p>Workers need to know about the procedures that have been implemented. Everyone should be aware of their responsibility to participate in preventing workplace bullying. Ensure that everyone is aware of acceptable workplace behaviours. Ensure reports will be actioned appropriately (ie transparently but confidentially, and in a timely manner) to improve workplace safety.</p> <p>New workers should be advised of the organisation’s zero tolerance towards bullying and the correct reporting procedures during their induction training.</p>
	<p><b>Use bullying reports.</b></p> <p>Bullying reports are a resource for managers to develop and implement improvement measures. When incidents or injuries – including psychological injuries – occur, reporting systems can be reviewed to improve bullying prevention procedures. The reviewing of reports identifies trends that may help identify underlying behavioural issues Trends should be discussed with workers.</p>
<p>Where the orange zone is ticked...</p>	<p>The PCBU is beginning to identify bullying behaviours but is not doing all it can to prevent their recurrence.</p> <p>Ticks in the <b>orange</b> zone indicate that there is a benefit in reporting procedures, but there still needs to be an examination of the suitability of procedures and the consistency with which they are followed.</p>
	<p><b>Do workers and managers understand the bullying reporting procedures?</b></p> <p>For safety procedures to be effective, workers and managers must understand them. Are the procedures documented? Does everyone in the workplace have access to a copy? Have the procedures been reviewed in consultation with workers? Is everyone clear about their health and safety responsibilities?</p>
	<p><b>Have responsibilities changed?</b></p> <p>Sometimes, when changes occur in a workforce, responsibilities for bullying prevention may have to be re-allocated. Employers should ensure that everyone is aware of new roles and responsibilities. Do not allow follow-up action on bullying prevention issues to stall because of personnel changes.</p>
	<p><b>Is the link between bullying reporting and complaint handling procedures clear?</b></p> <p>When a bullying incident or injury including psychological injury occurs in the workplace, it may indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is no procedure for dealing with the risk of bullying</li> <li>• the current procedure does not give enough protection</li> <li>• all workers are not following the bullying prevention or complaint handling procedure.</li> </ul> <p>After an incident or injury, bullying prevention/complaint handling procedures should be reviewed and, if necessary, new procedures developed.</p>

## Where the green zone is ticked...

Workers and management are following reporting procedures and bullying issues and problems are being addressed.

Ticks in the **green** zone indicate that the PCBU has implemented a system for reporting bullying issues, risks and incidents, and ensures that reports of bullying behaviours are addressed appropriately.

Reports are used as a management tool to continually improve workplace behaviours. Information from the bullying reports may include:

- problems with training staff to appropriately behave in the workplace
- difficulties workers have in understanding bullying prevention procedures
- flaws in the bullying prevention/complaints handling procedures.

Consultation with workers about appropriate workplace behaviours and the prevention of workplace bullying should be ongoing.

### Disclaimer

This publication may contain occupational health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website ([www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)).

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