Occurrence management and investigations

An overview of the occurrence management (including hazard and occurrence reporting) and investigation process under the OneRMS safety management system (OneRMS SMS).
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Introduction

Occurrence management and investigation are an integral part of work health and safety (WHS) risk management. The reporting of hazards and occurrences is essential to understanding risks in the workplace and managing them appropriately.

The management of occurrences ensures:
- There is an appropriate response:
  - Affected workers are provided with appropriate care
  - As necessary, authorities and stakeholders are notified
  - The occurrence is investigated if required
- Information about risks is fed back into the OneRMS SMS and lessons are learned
- There is less likelihood of the occurrence happening again.

Purpose

This framework provides an overview of the occurrence management and investigation process under the OneRMS SMS including:
- Hazard and occurrence reporting
- Occurrence management
- Safety investigation
- Safety action tracking.
Figure 1 describes the components and safety assurance activities of the occurrence management and investigation process. We build WHS capability to support this process (see WHS capability and training framework).

**Scope and context**

This framework applies across Roads and Maritime Services (Roads and Maritime).

**System requirements**

Requirements under this framework can be found in Appendix A. For all system requirements see the OneRMS SMS manual.
Occurrence management and investigations

1. Occurrence management and investigations process

Our WHS processes provide a means to report hazards and occurrences, ensure timely escalations and gather further, accurate risk information to improve our response and the elimination of risk. This process ensures we are treating safety risk adequately and learning from experience (Figure 2).

1.1 Hazard and occurrence reporting

All hazards and occurrences must be reported and entered into the Roads and Maritime WHS Reporting Line (1300 131 469) system. The information can be used to raise awareness of identified or potential hazards and risks and to contribute to a proactive safety culture.

There is a documented process that ensures workers can report all hazards and occurrences conveniently to provide essential information about the adequacy and vulnerability of our risk controls. The procedure [Hazard and occurrence reporting](#) outlines how and what should be reported, including significant and sensitive occurrences.

We have a detailed process for reporting notifiable incidents to the Regulator. The [Hazard and occurrence reporting](#) and [Occurrence management](#) procedures provide guidance on reporting notifiable incidents.
1.2 Occurrence management

The procedure *Occurrence management* details how reported hazards and occurrences are assessed, managed and escalated to investigations, if required.

**The proper management of occurrences ensures:**

- There is an appropriate response
  - Affected workers are provided with appropriate care
  - As necessary, authorities and stakeholders are notified
  - The occurrence is investigated if necessary.
- Information about risks is fed back into the system and lessons are learned
- There is less likelihood of the occurrence happening again.

1.3 Safety investigations

A safety investigation is a systematic and independent examination of a *safety matter*. The purpose is to identify system deficiencies which, when corrected, can eliminate or reduce safety risks. The outcomes also demonstrate what controls are currently effective and why the system normally operates safely.

The investigation of safety occurrences and safety matters are critical to preventing recurrence and enabling us to learn from safety occurrences. Safety investigations also provide the opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of hazard controls, and determine whether additional or more effective controls are required.

**Safety investigation ensures:**

- Safety issues are identified
- Information about risks is fed back into the system and lessons are learned
- There is less likelihood of a similar occurrence happening again
- Timely, consistent and objective safety information is communicated and available to the agency, Roads and Maritime management and external agencies (eg SafeWork NSW).

Our processes ensure the systematic investigation of safety matters. The procedure *Safety investigation* provides guidance on criteria for whether an investigation is required, at what level, who can conduct it and what protocols should be followed to ensure investigations are carried out in a timely manner.
1.4 Safety action tracking

Safety actions are carried out to address safety issues that arise from a variety of safety assurance processes such as occurrence management, safety investigation, audit and inspection.

**Safety action tracking** is the process for:

- Managing safety actions
- Ensuring appropriate personnel are involved in undertaking safety actions and assuring their outcomes
- Tracking the progress of safety actions to completion
- Ensuring applicable lessons learned are fed back into the OneRMS SMS and future business practices.

The procedure Safety action tracking provides assurance safety actions are being captured and completed in a timely manner, responsible parties are identified and the evidence trail is preserved.

If notices are received from the Regulator, they are addressed under the safety action tracking process.
Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities under this framework are described in the Hazard and occurrence reporting, Occurrence management, Safety investigation and Safety action tracking procedures.

Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hazard</td>
<td>A state or set of conditions that, together, with other conditions in the environment may lead to a hazardous event.</td>
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<td>Source or situation with a potential to cause human injury or ill-health.</td>
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<td>Occurrence</td>
<td>A series of events and conditions that results in, or has the potential to result in, a non-trivial amount of damage or injury.</td>
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<td>An occurrence that could have resulted in damage or injury but did not is generally referred to as a near-miss.</td>
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<td>Safety issue</td>
<td>Any matter that causes concern for safety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety matter</td>
<td>An occurrence, series of occurrences, a hazardous condition or set of conditions that has affected, is affecting, or might affect safety.</td>
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References

Roads and Maritime references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doc no</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>PN066P27</td>
<td>Occurrence management procedure</td>
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<td>PN066P28</td>
<td>Hazard and occurrence reporting procedure</td>
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<tr>
<td>PN066P29</td>
<td>Safety investigation procedure</td>
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<td>PN066P30</td>
<td>Safety action tracking procedure</td>
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# Appendices

## A. OneRMS SMS requirements

### Occurrence management and investigations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OMI</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| OMI1 | Provide a reporting system through which hazards and occurrences can be reported and communicated | Roads and Maritime:  
  - Implements and maintains a documented process that ensures workers can report all hazards and occurrences. The procedure *Hazard and occurrence reporting* outlines how and what should be reported, including reporting of significant and sensitive occurrences  
  - Identifies the need for, develops and distributes safety information and communications following reports of hazards and occurrences. See *Safety promotion framework*.  
  *WHS Act* (section 27) |
| OMI2 | Assess and respond to reported hazards and occurrences                         | Roads and Maritime implements and maintains a system by which hazards and occurrences are responded to. The procedure *Occurrence management* details how occurrences are managed and escalated to investigations if required; the daily triage (occurrence assessment) process is described.  
  *WHS Act* (section 27) |
| OMI3 | Report ‘notifiable incidents’ to the regulator                                | Roads and Maritime implements and maintains a process for reporting notifiable incidents to the regulator. The procedure *Hazard and occurrence reporting* details how this is done.  
  *WHS Act* (sections 27, 35 and 38) |
| OMI4 | Manage and track safety actions (including regulatory notices)               | Roads and Maritime implements and maintains a process to ensure regulatory notices are complied with and if relevant, safety actions are carried out. The procedure *Safety action tracking* provides assurance that safety actions are being captured and completed in a timely manner, responsible parties are identified and the evidence trail is preserved.  
  *WHS Act* (section 27) |
| OMI5 | Ensure the systemic investigation of safety matters                           | Roads and Maritime implements and maintains a process to ensure the systematic investigation of safety matters. The procedure *Safety investigation* provides criteria for whether an investigation is required and at what level, who can conduct it and what protocols should be followed to ensure investigations are carried out in a timely manner.  
  *WHS Act* (section 27) |
Document control

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Feedback

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