Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PSPSOHS508A Participate in the investigation of incidents

Release 3

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Modification History

Release	TP Version	Comments
3	PSP12V1	Unit descriptor edited.
2	PSP04V4.2	Layout adjusted. No changes to content.
1	PSP04V4.1	Primary release.

Unit Descriptor

This unit covers participation in the planning, conduct and reporting of investigations of incidents which have resulted in, or have a potential to result in, injury or damage. Situations may range from relatively minor through to major incidents.

In practice, participating in the investigation of incidents may overlap with other generalist or specialist public sector work activities such as promoting ethical practice, using complex communication strategies, undertaking research and analysis, coordinating resource usage, promoting compliance with legislation.

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

Application of the Unit

This unit applies to individuals with managerial responsibility for occupational health and safety (OHS) who are required to participate in the investigation of incidents for prevention. It includes conducting an initial assessment of the situation, establishing the scope and legal parameters of the investigation, conducting a systematic analysis to identify underlying causes and actions for prevention and reporting on the outcomes of the investigation.

The unit applies to both straightforward investigations as well as formal investigations of complex situations. Where the investigation is of a complex situation or the application of the skills and knowledge is in a larger organisation, procedures for incident investigation will exist. In smaller organisations there may not be existing investigation procedures and external OHS expertise should be accessed where required.

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

Employability Skills Information

This unit contains employability skills.

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements describe the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.	Performance criteria describe the required performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where ***bold italicised*** text is used, further information is detailed in the range statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the evidence guide.

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1 Facilitate initial assessment of situation	1.1 Area is checked to ensure that it is safe and arrangements have been made to meet initial needs of those involved in the incident.
	1.2 Integrity of the site and personnel is established and maintained in accordance with legal requirements and to ensure objectivity of information collected.
	1.3 Statutory and legal obligations are identified and, if required, *relevant government agencies* advised.
	1.4 *Key persons within the organisation* are notified.
	1.5 Factors affecting the *complexity* of the investigation are determined and notified.
	1.6 *Stakeholders and interested parties* are identified and notified as appropriate.
2 Participate in the establishment of an investigation processes	2.1 Organisational policies and procedures for incident investigation are accessed and known.
	2.2 *Investigation team* is convened appropriate to the level of the investigation.
	2.3 Scope of the investigation is defined taking account of legislative requirements.
	2.4 Involvement of interested parties is facilitated in accordance with legislative requirements.
	2.5 Resources required to conduct the investigation, including the need for expert advice (if required), are identified and sourced.
	2.6 *Barriers to investigation* are identified and addressed.
	2.7 Action plans and time lines are developed by the investigation team.
3 Collect information and data for analysis	3.1 Sources of information and data are identified and accessed.
	3.2 Incident site, equipment and other evidence involved is inspected.
	3.3 Gathering of information and data by others is facilitated.
	3.4 Statements, photographs, measurements and documentary evidence are taken and recorded, taking account of objectivity, confidentiality and legal implications.
	3.5 Site, evidence and all necessary documentation is appropriately secured.
	3.6 Members of investigation team are appropriately involved.
4 Analyse information and data gathered to identify immediate and underlying causes and practical prevention measures	4.1 *Conceptual basis for the analysis* is identified and understood by the investigation team.
	4.2 *Time line of events* leading up to incident is constructed.
	4.3 *Causative event/s* is researched.
	4.4 *Conditions and circumstances* that contributed to the causative event are identified.

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ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
	4.5 Intervention points on the time line for prevention are identified.
	4.6 Strategies to prevent the re-occurrence of the incident are identified.
5 Compile investigation report	5.1 Results of analysis are documented in a format to suit the required ***target audiences*** and legal requirements.
	5.2 Report is phrased in objective terms and cites evidence and reasons for conclusions.
	5.3 Report includes recommendations for prevention.
	5.4 Following appropriate authorisation, relevant information and data is disseminated to key personnel, stakeholders and external agencies as appropriate.
	5.5 Findings from the report are used to develop further prevention strategies.

Required Skills and Knowledge

This section describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level, required for this unit.

Required skills:
Look for evidence that confirms skills in:

- relating to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and physical and mental abilities
- communicating effectively with personnel at all levels of organisation and OHS specialists and, as required, emergency service personnel
- preparing legally defensible reports for a range of target groups including OHS committee, OHS representatives, managers and supervisors
- managing own tasks within time frame
- using consultation and negotiation skills, particularly in relation to developing plans and implementing and monitoring designated actions
- analysing relevant workplace information and data, and make observations including of workplace tasks and interactions between people, their activities, equipment, environment and systems
- using language and literacy skills appropriate to the workgroup and the task
- using basic computer and information technology skills to access internal and external information and data on OHS
- paying attention to detail when making observations and recording outcomes

Required knowledge:
Look for evidence that confirms knowledge and understanding of:

- roles and responsibilities under OHS legislation of employees, including supervisors and contractors
- legislative requirements for OHS information and data, and consultation
- rights of OHS inspectors
- requirements for record keeping that addresses OHS, privacy and other legislation
- state/territory/Commonwealth OHS legislation (Acts, regulations, codes of practice, associated standards and guidance material) including prescriptive and performance approaches and links to other relevant legislation such as industrial relations, equal employment opportunity, workers compensation, rehabilitation etc
- structure and forms of legislation including regulations, codes of practice, associated standards and guidance material
- concept of common law duty of care
- methods of providing evidence of compliance with OHS legislation
- principles and practices of continuity and validity of evidence retention for potential legal action
- requirements for reporting under OHS and other relevant legislation including notification and reporting of incidents
- requirements under hazard specific OHS legislation and codes of practice

- basic principles of incident causation and injury processes
- characteristics, mode of action and units measurement of major hazard types
- hierarchy of control and considerations for choosing between different control measures, such as possible inadequacies of particular control measures
- standard industry controls for a range of hazards
- principles and practices of systematic approaches to managing OHS
- other function areas that impact on the management of OHS
- internal and external sources of OHS information and data
- how the characteristics and composition of the workforce impact on risk and the systematic approach to managing OHS e.g.
  - labour market changes
  - structure and organisation of workforce e.g. part-time, casual and contract workers, shift rosters, geographical location
  - language, literacy and numeracy
  - communication skills
  - cultural background/workplace diversity
  - gender
  - workers with special needs
- ethics related to professional practice
- knowledge of organisational OHS policies and procedures
- nature of workplace processes (including work flow, planning and control) and hazards relevant to the particular workplace
- formal and informal communication and consultation processes and key personnel related to communication
- language, literacy and cultural profile of the workgroup
- organisational culture as it impacts on the workgroup

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Evidence Guide

The Evidence Guide specifies the evidence required to demonstrate achievement in the unit of competency as a whole. It must be read in conjunction with the unit descriptor, performance criteria, The range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Public Sector Training Package.

Units to be assessed together	Co-assessed units that may be assessed with this unit to increase the efficiency and realism of the assessment process include: • PSPETHC501B Promote the values and ethos of public service • PSPGOV512A Use complex workplace communication strategies • PSPLEGN501B Promote compliance with legislation in the public sector • PSPSOHS504A Apply principles of OHS risk management • PSPSOHS505A Manage hazards in the work environment • PSPSOHS506A Monitor and facilitate the management of hazards associated with plant
Overview of evidence requirements	In addition to integrated demonstration of the elements and their related performance criteria, look for evidence that confirms: • knowledge requirements of this unit • skill requirements of this unit • application of employability skills as they relate to this unit
Resources required to carry out assessment	Resources essential for assessment include: • legislation, policy, procedures and protocols relating to the investigation of incidents • workplace documentation, case studies and workplace scenarios to capture the range of situations likely to be encountered when participating in the investigation of incidents
Where and how to assess evidence	Valid assessment of this unit requires: • a workplace environment or one that closely resembles normal work practice and replicates the range of conditions likely to be encountered when participating in the investigation of incidents, including coping with difficulties, irregularities and breakdowns in routine • participation in the investigation of incidents in a range of 3 or more contexts or occasions, over time Assessment methods should reflect but not exceed workplace demands, such as literacy, and the needs of individuals who might be disadvantaged.

Assessment methods suitable for valid and reliable assessment of this unit must use authenticated evidence from the workplace and/or training courses and may include a combination of two or more of:

- workplace projects
- simulation or role plays
- case studies and scenarios
- observation
- portfolios

The assessment environment should not disadvantage the candidate and where the person has a disability the principle of reasonable adjustment should be applied during assessment.

For consistency of assessment

Evidence must be gathered over time in a range of contexts to ensure the person can achieve the unit outcome and apply the competency in different situations or environments.

Range Statement

The range statement provides information about the context in which the unit of competency is carried out. The variables cater for differences between States and Territories and the Commonwealth, and between organisations and workplaces. They allow for different work requirements, work practices and knowledge. The range statement also provides a focus for assessment. It relates to the unit as a whole. Text in *bold italics* in the Performance criteria is explained here.

Relevant government agencies may include:	• OHS authorities • environment protection agencies • police and other emergency services
Key persons within the organisation may include:	• senior management • OHS specialists within organisation • organisational legal advisor • union or staff association representatives • workgroup members • supervisors • personnel involved in incident/situation • employee assistance personnel • external specialist personnel and contractors
Complexity may be affected by:	• legal implications arising from the incident or post incident related matters • involvement of external agencies • language competencies of parties involved • technical implications • seriousness of injury or other outcomes • conflict of interest issues • existence of secondary hazards • administrative implications • level of public or political interest • international conventions • number of other parties, including sub-contractors
Stakeholders and interested parties may include:	• community • the organisation's board or advisory council • coroner • government agencies, including OHS and emergency service agencies • managers • insurance companies • employees and family members

- politicians
- workgroup members and people who may be exposed to similar situations
- unions
- employers
- designers
- manufacturers
- suppliers and distributors
- persons in control of workplaces
- sub-contractors
- importers
- installers
- media

Investigation team should include persons:	• familiar with the task and the work environment • responsible for performance standards within the work environment (e.g. supervisor) • with OHS expertise • in OHS representative role • in authority in organisation such as company/organisational legal advisor and technical experts as required • Note: that different roles may be performed by the one person, especially in smaller organisations
Barriers to investigation may include:	• changes to incident scene • length of time from when incident occurred/first identified • management and employee attitude including desire to protect self and others • political and community stakeholder sensitivity • time limits imposed • limited resources available • legal restrictions or limitations (temporary, short-term or long-term) • geographical location and/or accessibility • economic implications • condition of witnesses • cultural issues • language • availability of research data and analysis or testing equipment • availability of technical design information and data relevant to the investigation • lack of records
Conceptual basis for the analysis should:	• emphasise analysis of the systems in place at the time of the incident • focus on the 'why' and 'how' rather than the 'what' • encourage an open minded, objective approach • not focus on individual behaviour or fault
Time line of events should:	• extend back in time as far as required and not just focus on immediate events
*A **causative event*** is:	• the key event that resulted in the particular outcome/s of injury or damage
Condition is:	• a permanent situation such as type of equipment, work practice, design of work environment

Circumstance is:	• a short-term situation that is relatively unusual, such as a storm or when a key person is absent
Target audiences for the report/*s* may include:	• board of management • senior managers • OHS committee • external agencies • police or coroner

Unit Sector(s)

Not applicable.

Competency field

Specialist Occupational Health & Safety.