

Management of PALM critical incidents and worker welfare issues

Standard operating procedure

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Australian Government

Contents

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

4.1	Incident notification or welfare concerns raised	10
4.2	Notifications and information sharing	14

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Pages 3-9 deleted under section 22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act

4.1 Incident notification or welfare concerns raised

4.1.1 Intake

PALM scheme employers are required to notify DEWR of critical incidents involving PALM workers via the employer portal (PALMIS) and by phone on the PALM support line (1800 51 51 31). The PALM support line is available 24 hours a day for critical incident notification and other urgent matters. During business hours the PALM support line is served by the PALM Contact Centre (PCC). WWIT staff cover the phone after hours (6:30pm - 8:30am AEST) on a rostered basis.

During business hours, critical incidents and other concerns for worker welfare received by PCC via the portal, support line or PALM@dewr.gov.au inbox are triaged to the WWIT critical incidents and welfare queue in PALMIS (s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @dewr.gov.au).

After hours, the on-call officer receiving a critical incident notification by phone, takes down the incident details and creates a critical incident or general case in PALMIS.

4.1.1.1 Critical incident and welfare issue definitions

Chapter 13 of the PALM scheme guidelines provides an overview all incident notification requirements of PALM scheme employers as a condition of their participation in the scheme. Critical incidents are outlined in Section [13.2.1 of the guidelines](#):

Critical Incidents are defined in clause 17.1 of the Deed and mean an occurrence of a serious matter involving Workers or others that includes the following situations:

- (a) a death of a Worker**
- (b) any serious or significant accident injury or illness of a Worker**
- (c) any serious or significant accident, injury, illness or death of any other employee or member of the public on an Approved Employer's or Host Organisation's site**
- (d) significant industrial action taken by Workers that has community-wide implications, an action involving large number of Workers and/or has service-wide repercussions**
- (e) when a Worker is:**
 - (i) arrested or**
 - (ii) charged with a criminal offence or**
 - (iii) a victim of a criminal offence or**
 - (iv) required to relocate immediately due to a serious risk to any Worker's safety or wellbeing and**
- (f) any other incident that may negatively impact upon the Department or bring the Approved Employer or the Scheme into disrepute.**

PALM scheme employers are required to notify DEWR of critical incidents **as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours** of any critical incidents.

WWIT also receives notifications of incidents or issues raised involving worker welfare matters that despite not being captured as a critical incident in the PALM scheme guidelines, still pose a significant risk to worker welfare and wellbeing and provide an opportunity for oversight and intervention. Such instances include - incidents involving gender-based violence (where not captured as a critical incident), mental health issues, pregnancy notifications and concern for worker welfare.

4.1.1.2 Pregnancy


PALM scheme employers do, on occasion, notify DEWR of worker pregnancies. A worker's pregnancy status, in isolation, does not meet any incident notification criteria. Co-existing risk factors such as health conditions, welfare concerns, domestic and family violence could indicate a critical incident or concern for worker welfare. An unexpected or unplanned birth of a child is considered a critical incident and handled accordingly.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)



Critical incidents

- Death of a worker
- Serious, significant accident, injury, illness or death of a worker or any other employee or member of the public on a worksite
- Worker is:
 - Arrested or charged with a criminal offence
 - Victim of a criminal offence
- Incident posing serious reputational risk to the scheme



Welfare issues

- Incidents or queries flagging worker welfare issues that don't meet CI criteria but should be referred to WWIT:
- Gender based violence issues (including family and domestic violence, sexual harassment or assault, coercive control, financial abuse, image-based abuse
- Mental health issues
- Pregnancy notifications (early notifications)
- Family Accompaniment Pilot
- Concerns for worker welfare

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

4.2.1.1 Notifying PALM partner country officials (HOM Notifications)

WWIT staff are responsible for providing notifications of critical incidents to PALM partner country Heads of Mission (HOMs), Country Liaison Officers (CLOs) and Labour Sending Units (LSUs). Partner country officials play a critical support role for workers. Workers have high expectations of their sending country with regards to support. Information sharing is essential to enabling this.

WWIT staff alert partner country officials of critical incidents involving their citizens. These notifications need to be accurate, timely, relevant and respectful. Notifications must be issued preferably (or where possible) within 12 hours of receiving and verifying information to enable officials to engage with workers and/or their families in a proactive way.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Pages 16-28 deleted under section 22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act