

# Reporting and investigating Potentially Serious Incidents (PSIs)

OHS information for workers, employers and prime contractors

## KEY INFORMATION

- The types of incidents and injuries reportable to government are:
  - 1) serious injury or incidents,
  - 2) incidents at a mine or mine site, and
  - 3) potentially serious incidents (PSIs).
- It is the responsibility of the prime contractor, or if there isn't one, the employer of the work site to report the PSI to the Director of Inspection.
- Submit reports using the online reporting service:  
[oir.labour.alberta.ca](http://oir.labour.alberta.ca).

## What is a PSI?

A PSI is any event where a reasonable and informed person would determine that under slightly different circumstances, there would be a high likelihood for a serious injury to a person. A PSI is not limited to workers and it does not require the occurrence of an injury.

When determining whether an incident is a PSI, the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- actual circumstances of the incident (person, place, time, work practices being followed)
- hazards present at the time of the incident
- appropriate controls in place at the time of the incident
- slightly different circumstances (timing, distance, body position, etc.) that may have resulted in a serious injury
- similar incidents that have occurred within the employer or prime contractor's

operations in the past two years that resulted in a serious injury

An injury is considered serious if it falls under Section 40(2)(a) or (b) of the *OHS Act*, in that it:

- results in a fatality, or
- causes an individual to be admitted to hospital as an inpatient.

## What information is required for the report?

Prime contractors or employers will be asked to provide but are not limited to the following information:

- the location of the PSI
- a description of what happened
- the time and date when the PSI occurred

PSI investigation reports are not admissible as evidence for any purpose in a trial arising out of the injury or incident, except in specific instances.



## Who is responsible for investigating the PSI?

To meet their obligations under the *OHS Act*, the employer or prime contractor must:

- Investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident. Involve the joint work site health and safety committee (HSC) or health and safety (HS) representative, if there is one.
- Prepare a report that outlines the circumstances of the incident and corrective actions taken, if any.
- Provide a copy of the report to the Director of Inspection.
- Provide a report to the HSC or HS representative, if applicable; if there is no committee or representative, a copy must be made available to workers.

- Retain a copy of the report for at least two years after the PSI occurred.

## What happens after a PSI has been reported?

An OHS officer may contact the employer/prime contractor and/or attend the work site to conduct an inspection. They have the authority but are not limited to the following activities:

- Collect information including electronic documents that relate to the health and

safety of workers, as well as statements from witnesses to the incident.

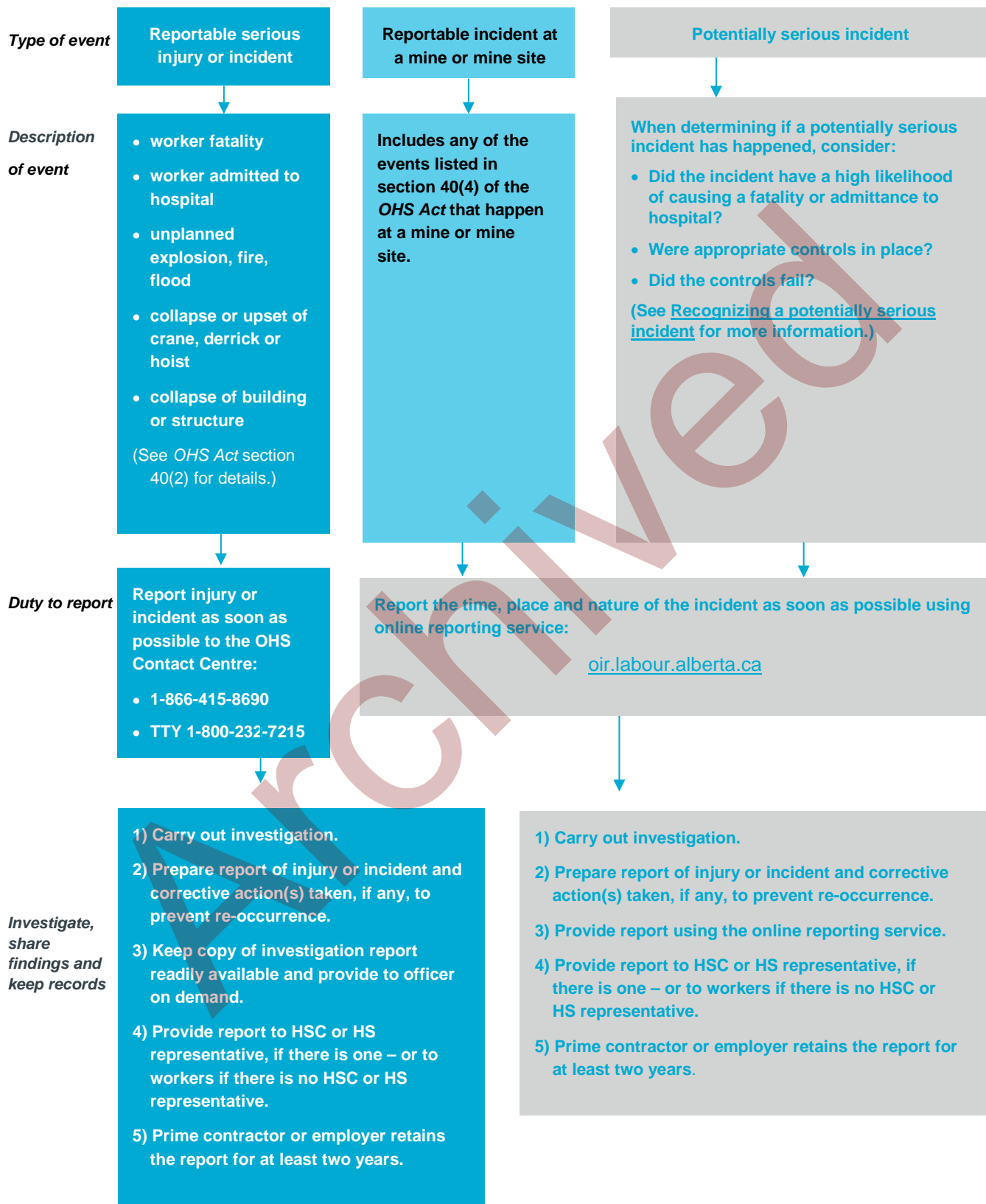
- Request documents, seize or take samples of any substance, material, product, tool, appliance or equipment that was present at, involved in, or related to the incident.

The employer is required to conduct their own independent investigation. A link to the **Sample Incident Investigation Report template** is provided in the “For more information” section.

**OHS Online Incident Reporting service**

[oir.labour.alberta.ca](https://oir.labour.alberta.ca)

## Flowchart for reporting incidents to Alberta Occupational Health and Safety



## PSI Examples

PSI	Non-Reportable Incident
A worker wearing a hard hat is struck on the head by a falling object and although stunned, recovers without injury. Several more, larger and heavier objects fall near the worker. If the worker had been in a slightly different position, they may have experienced a serious injury.	Workers are working overhead on a platform. There is netting in place to catch falling objects and the ground below work area is quarantined with barriers. A worker drops a hammer and it falls into the netting.
A worker is crossing a road in a marked intersection to another work site and is nearly hit by a vehicle. The worker was obeying traffic signals at the intersection. Changes in any factor such as their walking speed, the speed of the vehicle, their attentiveness to their environment may have resulted in the worker sustaining a serious injury.	A worker is walking and trips over an uneven surface and falls. The potential for a serious injury is low. For this employer, no other persons have experienced a serious injury from an incident of this type.
An armed person storms onto a work site and threatens workers with death. The armed person robs the work site and leaves. Workers are not physically injured but experience psychological harm. The potential for serious incident in this example is high, given the many factors involved – any change in one factor may have led to a different outcome.	A worker is being harassed at work. The employer does not have history of this type of incident and has policies and procedures in place to deal with harassment and violence. The employer is working with the worker and joint work site health and safety committee to address the issue.
A worker sweeping up and cleaning debris in a publicly accessible part of the work site received a needlestick injury from a needle of unknown origin. The worker is sent to an urgent care centre to be assessed and for follow-up care. The hazards associated with the needle are unknown.	A restaurant worker is preparing food and cuts their finger. They are treated with first aid. The potential for serious injury is low.
A resident at a group home becomes aggressive towards their support worker but does not injure workers physically or psychologically. The employer was aware of the resident's tendency towards aggressive behaviour but failed to inform workers.	A resident is known to be aggressive and all staff are made aware and trained to deal with aggressive residents. A resident is aggressive with staff and the staff implement training and controls appropriately.
During an arrest, a police officer is assaulted by a perpetrator. Personal protective equipment failed to protect the officer and they sustained a small non-serious cut to their throat. Under slightly different circumstances the officer could have been seriously injured.	During an arrest, a police officer is assaulted by a perpetrator. Personal protective equipment and training allows the officer to de-escalate the situation.

<p>A flag person controlling traffic at a highway construction project is almost hit by a passing car.</p>	<p>A flag person is standing behind a barrier while controlling traffic at a highway construction project. Vehicle operators respect the barriers and the posted speed limit. A person in a passing vehicle tosses a cigarette from their vehicle and almost hits the flag person. Potential for serious injury is low.</p>
<p>A chemical substance is unexpectedly discharged into the open air at a product processing site when no persons were present. This was not a planned event. If a person was present, they would have sustained serious injury.</p>	<p>A chemical release at a plant is planned and all persons present are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.</p>
<p>A vehicle is left unattended overnight on a slight slope at a work site. No workers are at the work site. A mechanical failure results in the vehicle rolling down-slope. Workers arrive the next day to find that the vehicle has crashed into fencing. No one was injured. If a person was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, they may have sustained serious injury.</p>	<p>An unattended vehicle's parking break fails, and the vehicle rolls three feet into a parking lot guard rail scratching the front head light.</p>
<p>While hoisting a motor, the weld on the lifting eye breaks. The area around and below the electric motor is not secured with appropriate controls. The motor falls. No one was injured. If a person was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, they could have sustained serious injury.</p>	<p>While hoisting a motor, the area around and below is secured with the appropriate controls. One of the hoisting straps inadvertently releases and the motor shifts.</p>
<p>A bicyclist ignored the "Road Closed" signs and proceeds to travel along the road. No barriers were placed around the open sewer. The bicyclist does not realize a sewer cover had been removed and lodges their front tire into the sewer. They are ejected from their bicycle and sustain injury to their face.</p>	<p>A sidewalk is under construction and barriers are placed to restrict access to this section of the sidewalk. A pedestrian tripped over the corner of the barrier and stumbles.</p>

**Get Copies of *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code**

**Alberta Queen's Printer**  
[qp.gov.ab.ca](http://qp.gov.ab.ca)

**Occupational Health and Safety**  
[alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx](http://alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Reporting and investigating injuries and incidents (LI016)**

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li016](http://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li016)

**Sample Investigation Report Template (LI016TMP)**

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li016tmp](http://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li016tmp)

**Reporting and investigating OHS incidents at a mine or mine site (LI016-2)**

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li016-2](http://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li016-2)

**Work site health and safety committees and representatives**

[alberta.ca/work-site-health-safety-committees.aspx](http://alberta.ca/work-site-health-safety-committees.aspx)

**The role and duties of the prime contractor (LI018)**

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li018](http://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li018)

**The role and duties of an officer (LI046)**

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li046](http://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li046)

**Contact Us**

**OHS Contact Centre**

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

**OHS Online Incident Reporting service**

(Potentially serious, mine or mine site incidents)

[oir.labour.alberta.ca](http://oir.labour.alberta.ca)

**Website**

[alberta.ca/OHS](http://alberta.ca/OHS)

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