



Observing & Incident Reporting

Guardian Angel Home Care Pty Ltd

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OBSERVING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS

Mistakes are an unavoidable aspect of human endeavours, and accidents can occur across various professions. However, the occurrence of errors can be mitigated by developing systems that create barriers to mistakes and facilitate the correct actions. Taking a proactive approach is underpinned by the belief that preventing errors is more cost-effective than addressing their consequences. Understanding the reasons behind errors and near misses is crucial for enhancing client safety among home health care workers, as it enables them to learn from past experiences. Identifying and rectifying errors leads to a reduction in:

- Personal and facility risk liability,
- Negative publicity, and
- Harm to both clients and workers.

While making mistakes may be inherent in human nature, so is the inclination to devise solutions and explore alternative methods.

INCIDENT REPORTING

The term incident report is frequently used in the healthcare setting. Rather than being merely a document, it represents a systematic process for recording occurrences that deviate from the regular care provided to clients. Incident reports:

- Detail events that are unexpected, unusual, or outside the ordinary routine for a home healthcare worker, regardless of whether they result in injury.
- Serve as the foundation for prompt investigations if necessary.
- Supply information for planning corrective or remedial actions.
- Offer raw data to identify trends in risks, recurring issues, and patient safety concerns, facilitating procedural changes or in-service training.
- Furnish essential information for defending staff members or healthcare facilities in potential lawsuits.

All healthcare providers must comprehend the purpose behind generating incident reports and exhibit appropriate reporting behaviours. Workers require a precise understanding of what qualifies as a reportable incident.

Incident reports play a crucial role in safeguarding the worker. For instance, imagine visiting a client's home and discovering a fresh bruise on their arm. Upon inquiry, the client attributes it to a fall from the couch earlier in the day. Assuming it's insignificant,

you proceed with your tasks. However, days later, you learn that the client has multiple stress fractures, and the family accuses you of abuse. If you had verbally reported the incident at the time and followed up with a written report, you could have minimized your vulnerability to such accusations. Timely reporting could have prompted intervention or medical attention, indicating your awareness of the situation and dispelling any suspicions of a cover-up.

WHEN AND WHAT TO REPORT:

Outlined below are situations that warrant contacting the office for further guidance. This list is not exhaustive, as unforeseen events may arise, prompting reporting even if not explicitly listed. When uncertain, it is advisable to call the office, where we may document the issue in the file if appropriate. If necessary, we will guide you to complete an incident report.

- Any noticeable change in your client's behaviour.
- Unexplained bruises or marks on your client.
- Your client informs you of a previous fall.
- All medical emergencies once the immediate situation is resolved.
- Personal injury sustained while on the job.
- Accidental exposure to infectious material.
- Accidents during client transfers resulting in a fall, regardless of apparent injuries.
- Your client accidentally takes the wrong or excessive medication.
- Incidents in the home or car while on duty.
- Verbal confrontations with clients or their family members.
- False accusations from your client, potentially indicating early signs of dementia.
- Sores or open wounds on your elderly client.
- Any observed deterioration in your client's medical condition.

Basically, promptly report any unusual or extraordinary occurrences to the office. Being aware of the issue enables us to assist you and provides an additional layer of protection against potential liability.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU FILE THE REPORT?

The report undergoes a review by the Director and is subsequently presented during the next Quality Improvement (QI) meeting. During this meeting, only the incident itself is scrutinized, ensuring the anonymity of both the client and the worker involved. The QI committee is tasked with identifying trends in risks based on the incident reports. As an illustration, the implementation of our "no lift" policy stemmed from a pattern observed in incident reports, revealing injuries to both clients and workers during transfers. Consequently, the decision to introduce the no-lift policy aimed to mitigate future injuries.

It's crucial to bear in mind that reporting an incident or seeking assistance will not lead to any repercussions. Consequences arise only when incidents go unreported, or help is not sought.

Authorized by,

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