Australian Government
Services Australia

Customer aggression - Post incident contact 104-07020070

Currently published version valid from 18/11/2025 8:16 PM

Background

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If an incident is occurring:
• for sites providing face to face services, follow Emergency Response Procedures Aggression (ERPAs)
• for non-customer facing sites, follow Emergency Response Procedures - Aggression
• for agents, follow Emergency Response Procedures - Aggression (ERPAs) for agents
• for customers talking about self-harm, see Customer talking about suicide or self-harm

This document outlines the process Managers and Team Leaders in Services Australia are to follow when conducting post incident contact after an incident of customer aggression and counterproductive behaviour.

Post incident contact

Contacting the customer after an incident of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour helps keep staff safe.

Post incident contact allows Services Australia to:

- understand what happened from the customer's perspective
- reinforce Services Australia's expectations of respectful behaviour
- help assess the future risk to staff and customer safety
- understand, follow-up and resolve the trigger for the incident including providing referrals
- provide a warning which can be a verbal warning or a warning letter
- discuss the implementation of a Managed Service Plan (MSP) where applicable
- discuss service restrictions and the possible consequences of non-compliance, i.e. prosecution for criminal trespass

Post incident contact should be undertaken by the Line Manager/Team Leader of the person who experienced the incident of customer aggression to discuss the incident and potential consequences of their behaviour.

Where the staff member who experienced the incident is a Team Leader or Manager, the impact of the incident on them must be considered. If they do not feel confident making the contact, they should ask a colleague, or a supervisor, not directly involved to make contact. When post incident contact includes notifying a customer of the implementation of an MSP this should be conducted by the one main contact. If required, seek advice from the local Customer Aggression Network Operational Contact or the Customer Aggression Prevention Team (CAPT).

Factors to consider before making customer contact

Where a customer poses an ongoing risk to staff safety, a Managed Service Plan (MSP) must be implemented. For more information about MSP referrals and proposals across business areas, see Customer aggression - Managed Service Plan (MSP).

The details of the incident will inform the timing of post incident contact. The following should be considered:

- Where a provisional MSP is implemented due to the risk to the safety of staff and property, the decision may be to contact the customer immediately. This allows Services Australia the opportunity to notify the customer of the limits to their contact options before the customer attempts further contact

- The effects of aggression can affect the customer's capacity to process information after an incident. Judgement should be used in deciding when to make contact with the customer, and it may be appropriate to contact them a day after the incident
- Approved decision makers should consider the effectiveness of sending a warning or MSP SMS to the customer if it is determined the compact delivery of a key message is warranted prior to sending the relevant warning or MSP letter

If required, seek advice from the local Customer Aggression Network Operational Contact or the Customer Aggression Prevention Team (CAPT).

Documenting contact (including unsuccessful attempts)

Contact attempts must be documented in the approved agency system:

- Centrelink: Customer Incident Management System (CIMS)
- Child Support: Customer Incident Recording Tool (CIRT) and CUBA
- Medicare: Customer Incident Recording Tool (CIRT)

Where a decision is made not to contact a customer, this must also be documented.

The 4 WHYS of recording customer aggression:

- For you It helps us support you and reduces risk
- For colleagues Help keep co workers informed and safe
- For our customers Our response helps keep customers safe
- By the rules Workplace health and safety legislation guidelines

For more information about the importance of documentation, see The 4 WHYS of recording resources and Learning Bites on the Training and Support page.

See Customer aggression - Reporting and recording incidents.

The Resources page includes links to the warning letter template, MSP letters guide, contact details for the Customer Aggression Prevention Team (CAPT), Customer Incident Management System intranet page, Customer Incident Recording Tool (CIRT) and Services Australia website.

Related links

Customer aggression - Managed Service Plan (MSP)

Managed Service Plan (MSP) - Recording, proposing and approving

Managed Service Plan (MSP) - Customer not complying

Customer aggression - Prevention and management

Customer aggression - Response

Customer aggression - Staff support

Customer aggression - Reporting and recording incidents

Family and domestic violence

Identifying customer vulnerability and risk issues

Customers talking about suicide or self-harm

Providing services to customers with disabilities

Interpreter Services for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing

Using the National Relay Service (NRS)

Risk identification and management of threats to the safety or welfare of a child

Managing complaints and feedback

Process

This document outlines the process Managers and Team Leaders in Services Australia are to follow when conducting post incident contact after an incident of customer aggression and counterproductive behaviour.

Contacting the customer following an incident of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour

This table outlines the process for Managers and Team Leader when determining if customer contact should occur following an incident of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour.

Step	Action

1	**Who is responsible for post incident contact decisions** + Read more ...
	
	Staff must report incidents of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour to their Line Manager and record the details using approved Services Australia systems. See Customer aggression - Reporting and recording incidents.
	
	Post incident contact should be undertaken by the Line Manager/Team Leader of the person who experienced the incident of customer aggression to discuss the incident and potential consequences of their behaviour.
	
	Where the customer is:
	
	• managed by a Personalised Services Support Officer/One Main Contact, the Personalised Services Support Officer/One Main Contact will make post incident contact attempts
	• being referred to a Personalised Services Support Officer/One Main Contact, or a specialised business line, the Line Manager/Team Leader of the staff member involved with the incident should conduct the post incident contact prior to the referral
	• a Medicare Provider, the Line Manager must escalate the email notification to the appropriate EL1 Manager who should contact the customer
	
	Managers receive notification of an incident through:
	
	• Staff (for example, verbal, Microsoft Teams or email)
	• Centrelink - Automatic email notification via the Customer Incident Management System (CIMS) to the recording person's Line Manager when an incident is recorded (Centrelink only)
	• Medicare:
	    ◦ Automatic email notification via Customer Incident Recording Tool (CIRT) to the recording person's Line Manager when an incident is recorded (Medicare only)
	    ◦ Where the customer is a Medical Practitioner or Provider type, the Line Manager must escalate the email notification to the appropriate EL1 Manager who should conduct the post incident contact
	• Child Support - Automatic email notification via CIRT to the recording person's Line Manager when an incident is recorded
	
	For more information about internal communication, see the Resources page for a link to the policy and standard for staff email and messaging on the Intranet.
	
	Note: for a customer on a Managed Service Plan (MSP) or being case managed, notify the One Main Contact (OMC) or Personalised Services Service Officer (PSSO) immediately. See Customer aggression - Reporting and recording incidents.

2	**Determine appropriate action following incident** + Read more ... Similar incidents may result in a different post incident contact decision based on the particular circumstances of each case. The Team Leader/Manager must update the incident record (CIMS/CIRT) with the review of the incident, actions taken, referral options if provided, details of the post incident contact with the customer (or contact attempts) and reasons for decisions. An assessment should be made with consideration of the following factors: • where the incident occurred (for example, Smart Centre, service centre) • who was involved (for example, Service Officer, Personalised Services Service Officer (PSSO), One Main Contact (OMC), Complaints Officer)

	• the details of the incident (for example, threat, verbal abuse)
	• the risk to staff, other customers or property
	• if the customer has a history of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour
	• the customer's unique circumstances, including any vulnerabilities or complex issues (e.g. homelessness, disabilities and medical conditions, literacy, language or cultural issues)
	• if the behaviour is isolated and out of character
	• any mitigating factors
	• any recent decisions made by Services Australia
	
	Following a review of the circumstances, decide on the most appropriate course of action from one or more of the following options:
	
	• Post incident telephone contact. Go to Step 3
	• It is not appropriate to contact the customer via telephone, based on the limited circumstances of the case
	For Centrelink, go to Step 4
	For Child Support and Medicare, go to Step 5
	• A Provisional MSP with service restrictions will be proposed/implemented based on the risk to the safety of staff or property. See Proposing and recording a Managed Service Plan (MSP). Procedure ends here
	• Where the customer is on an active MSP:
	  ◦ and they are not complying with the MSP, see Managed Service Plan (MSP) _ Customer not complying)
	  ◦ the MSP may need to be reviewed. See Managed Service Plan (MSP) _ Reviewing
	
	Any incident involving stalking, or harassment off site (i.e. outside work) should be reported to the police by a manager as soon as possible.
	
	Post incident contact with the customer should only occur after a discussion with the affected staff member and when advised by the police or Regional Security Adviser (RSA) that contact is appropriate.
	
	This contact gives the supervisor the opportunity to:
	
	• explain what behaviours are expected and appropriate
	• assess if there is a risk of the behaviour continuing or escalating, and
	• to provide a warning of the consequences should the behaviour be repeated

3	**Post incident discussion** + Read more ... This should be done by the Line Manager/Team Leader of the person who experienced the incident. The incident and potential consequences of the behaviour will be discussed. Where the customer is: • managed by a PSSO/OMC, in most cases the PSSO/OMC will make post incident contact attempts • a Medicare Provider, the Line Manager must escalate the email notification to the appropriate EL1 Manager who should contact the customer **The contact person should make genuine attempts to contact the customer to discuss the incident.** **Record all attempts to contact the customer in CIMS/CIRT Notes (including unsuccessful contact attempts).** To ensure the best possible chance of making telephone contact: • Attempt to call all available numbers • Consider the best time to call. Judgement should be used in deciding when to make contact with the customer, and it may be appropriate to contact them later in the day or the day after the incident • Where the customer cannot be identified, see Privacy concerns when calling customers, returning calls or leaving messages on answering machines • Consider the impact of different time zones for interstate and overseas customers • If the customer has a Power of Attorney, nominee or person permitted to enquire, and the decision is to contact the representative rather than the customer directly, check the limitations of information that can be exchanged. For more information, see Authorised representatives and nominees • If attempt to contact is unsuccessful and call is diverted to an answering machine or voicemail, the contact person should leave a short message identifying they are from Services Australia and advise they will attempt to phone again later (where possible provide a date and time). Child Support - for more information about maximising customer contact, including using a pre call SMS notification, see Contact with Child Support customers Depending on the circumstances, the discussion should include:

- The reason for the call
- Incident details; confirm what happened (the customer may apologise and where the incident included a threat, they may withdraw the threat)
- Be clear on Services Australia's expectations about behaviour and the focus on staff safety: you must treat our staff and other customers with respect
- The impact of their behaviour (e.g. elderly customers or young children, if they are shouting and using offensive language or it is difficult to focus on their concerns and provide a response)
- If the call is to provide a warning, advise that if behaviour reoccurs, i.e. you cause staff or others to feel unsafe, we may limit how you can contact us or call the police
- If the call is to advise of the implementation of an MSP, advise of any service restrictions and how to access services
- If the call is to remind the customer of their face to face service restrictions, advise them that non compliance may result in a prosecution for criminal trespass
- Explore underlying triggers/cause, providing the customer with the opportunity to explain what happened and why. Try to resolve, to prevent a reoccurrence (e.g. need for payment/service follow up)
- Where the customer has identified vulnerabilities or barriers, understand if any service strategies are needed including internal and external referral options. See Referral to external support services. This includes:
    - Social work services
    - Indigenous services
    - Family and domestic violence
    - Legal Aid
    - Counselling services
    - Housing assistance
    - Offering an interpreter
    - Personalised Services
- For customer's with disability or a medical condition, consider suitable services and assistance (see Providing services to customers with disabilities). This includes accessibility services e.g. using National Relay Service (NRS) for customers who are deaf, hard or hearing and/or have a speech disability
- The option to have someone else deal with us on his or her behalf (see Authorised representatives and nominees)
- Self service options
- An explanation of Services Australia decisions where appropriate. If after providing an explanation, the customer remains dissatisfied, consider whether complaints or appeals options should be considered
- Clarification or additional information where appropriate
- If the decision is to send a warning letter to reinforce the discussion, advise the customer
- If the decision is to send an SMS to provide a 'digital contact card' which includes details of the customer's PSSO/OMC phone number, advise the customer

If during the discussion, customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour occurs, consider the most appropriate course of action in accordance with the Aggressive Behaviour Response Model (ABRM).

Note: the Team Leader/Manager of the staff member involved should conduct the post incident contact even if the customer is being referred to a specialist area. If the customer has a history of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour a referral to Personalised Services for a MSP should be considered.

See also:

- Customer aggression - Prevention and management
- Customer aggression - Response
- Managed Service Plan (MSP) - Recording, proposing and approving

Is a written warning to be sent?

- **Yes**,
    - warning SMS go to Step 4
    - warning letter, go to Step 5
- **No**, go to Step 6

4 **Send an SMS via desktop messaging (Centrelink customers only)** + Read more ...

Make sure to select the most relevant SMS based on the customer's circumstances:

- Warning behaviour SMS
- MSP provisional SMS

	• MSP f2f & call restrict full/partial reminder SMS • Write only reminder SMS If the customer is subscribed to the Electronic Messaging (EM) service, the mobile number is recorded against only one customer record, and it is determined the compact delivery of a key message is warranted prior to sending the relevant MSP letter, consider sending an SMS notification. Is the customer subscribed to EM? Check the s 47E(d) screen for the customer's current subscription details. Is the mobile number only recorded against one customer record? Check the s 47E(d) screen. If the mobile number is recorded on more than one customer record, do not send the SMS. Ensure you select s 47E(d) ' prior to sending an SMS. Cross check dates, contact numbers and servicing arrangements where applicable. SMS can only be sent by approved decision makers in the following circumstances: • Customer cannot be contacted by phone • Telephone discussion with the customer was unproductive • Telephone contact was successful and it was determined that the customer may benefit from confirmation of MSP details by SMS • Waiting until the next day to call the customer may result in a more productive discussion and the customer would benefit from a preliminary message • Customer may benefit from having One Main Contact/Personalised Services Service Officer number(s) captured on their mobile phone For instructions on sending an SMS, see Centrelink letters online and Electronic Messaging. Additional information about message text is available in the DEMC messages user guide. **Due to the character limit, an SMS does not contain all required notification and decision information. Sending an SMS will complement not replace the corresponding letter.** **If an SMS is sent to the customer, ensure a note is added in the CIMS incident with details.**
5	**Send a warning/reminder letter** + Read more ... Warning/reminder letters are sent when: • a customer cannot be contacted by phone to discuss the incident or contact attempts have been unsuccessful • a discussion has already occurred, and it is considered that a warning letter will reinforce behavioural expectations Send the letter by Priority mail using the template on the Resources page. For information about MSPs and customer aggression letter delivery methods, see Managed Service Plan (MSP) – Implementing. See Customer Aggression - Managed Service Plan (MSP), letter and SMS decision makers for a list of approved decision makers. For more information about options where the customer does not have an address, see Where customers are unable to provide a residential address. Where there is **a high risk** to the safety of staff and property, it is not appropriate to issue a warning. For Centrelink and Medicare - Implement an MSPsee Managed Service Plan (MSP) - Recording, proposing and approving.
6	**Record contact** + Read more ... Document all post-incident contact attempts in the incident record, and reference in the MSP if applicable, using the approved Services Australia system. These are: • Centrelink - CIMS • Child Support - CIRT and CUBA • Medicare - CIRT Quality documentation helps keep staff safe by:

- identifying exactly what happened
- understanding the underlying cause of t igger for the behaviour
- assessing the risk the customer may pose
- developing servicing strategies for the customer
- informing future customer management strategies

Record the following details of the post incident contact:

- Factual and objective details of the discussion
- Limit the use of abbreviations
- Do not include judgements or speculations on the customer's intention or state of mind
- Avoid emotive language, for example instead of 'the customer was very angry...' use 'the customer said they were angry about...'
- Consideration of contributing factors that led to the behaviour
- Factors considered in determining whether to propose an MSP/ review current servicing strategies

Recording/Uploading letter or SMS

Centrelink

Update CIMS with the decision and upload a copy of the letter.

The work item s 47E(d) is a closed scan of this letter:

- Select the activity from the s 47E(d) screen to review the scan and action. If out of scope, re categorise the work item so it is allocated correctly to a suitably skilled Service Officer
- Check all pages of the scan in case the customer has uploaded a copy of the letter and provided a statement or more information that may need to be reviewed by the local manager/case manager who deals with the customer. Update the customer record as per the information that the customer has provided

If a warning behaviour/reminder SMS is sent to the customer, add a note to CIMS confirming the SMS was sent in the incident/MSP record.

Child Support

Update the Post Incident Contact Resolution in CIRT and record details in the CUBA s 47E(d) window in the corresponding CIRT notepad reference.

If a warning letter is sent to the customer:

- create a s 47E(d) in the customer's CUBA record. This will provide visibility across all Child Support business areas and an opportunity for staff to monitor customer behaviour. Where further incidents of aggression occur, a referral to Personalised Services (PS) for an MSP should be considered
  Note: the use of the s 47E(d) is available for all Child Support staff to assist with post incident contact
- upload a copy of the letter to the customer record in CUBA

Medicare

Update the Post Incident Contact Resolution note in the CIRT record. If a warning letter is sent to the customer, attach a copy using the s 47E(d) . See Customer aggression - Reporting and recording incidents

Documenting unsuccessful contact

- Reasons why the contact was unsuccessful (i.e. phone details not recorded)
- How the contact attempts were made (i.e. phone number)
- The number of contact attempts
- Action taken which can include issuing a warning letter and/or Implementing an MSP

Documenting decision not to contact

In all instances where a decision is made not to contact a customer, the decision should be supported with sufficient details and clearly explain:

- the decision not to contact
- any follow up action taken. For example, issue of a warning letter or recommending an MSP

	Note: all information recorded is subject to the provision of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. See Requests lodged under the Freedom of Information Act 1982. See Customer aggression Reporting and recording incidents
7	**Moderate and serious incidents** + Read more ... Where a decision is made to not implement an MSP for a moderate or serious incident, the reason for this decision must be recorded in the incident record.

Resources

Letter templates and guidelines

Letters sub site General Correspondence

Centrelink letters online and Electronic Messaging

See:

- Guide to MSP and warning letters templates
- Warning letter

Contact details

CAPT

Customer Aggression Network Operational Contact

Customer Incident Management System (CIMS) intranet page

Customer Incident Management System

Customer Incident Recording Tool (CIRT)

Customer Incident Recording Tool

Services Australia website

Accessibility

Extra help when calling us

Our service commitments

Your responsibilities

Payment and Service Finder

Intranet

Policy and standard for staff email and messaging

Training & Support

The agency's customer aggression training, the Managing Aggressive Behaviour Program (MAB Program) is mandatory for customer-contact staff and their direct supervisors.

Customer aggression prevention training further supports staff with 'Learning Bites' about preventing and managing customer aggression. 'The 4 WHYS to record' provides information to promote when and where staff record incidents of aggression and counterproductive behaviour. All customer aggression prevention Learning Bites and staff resources can be found by navigating to the relevant topic on the Customer Aggression Prevention Hub.

The Customer Aggression Training Summary outlines role required and recommended learning for; service delivery staff and their direct supervisors, staff who record, review and/or approve Managed Service Plans (MSPs).

CIMS role required learning is for all Centrelink service delivery staff and their direct supervisors. It is also role required for staff who record, review and/or approve Managed Service Plans (MSPs).

Advanced Customer Aggression Training

Externally facilitated courses for staff who are experienced in managing customers or lead teams of customer facing staff:

- s 47E(d) Advanced Customer Aggression
- s 47E(d) Advanced Customer Aggression for Leaders

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Customer aggression - Staff support 104-07040000

Currently published version valid from 12/12/2025 4:02 AM

Background

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Where there is, an immediate concern for the safety of a person, immediate danger or risk of harm:
Call **000** and ask for Police
Escalate as appropriate
Stay with the person until support is given

Refer to the Staff Distress Response Toolkit. For general support outside of work hours, staff can contact the Employee Assistance Program or call Lifeline on **131 114**.

This document provides information for managers to support staff following an incident of customer aggression, counterproductive behaviour or a period of stress.

For more information on preventing and managing customer aggression, see Customer aggression - Prevention and management.

Manager response and support

An incident can affect people differently. How a person deals with an incident may be influenced by:

- their mental and physical health
- level of support at the time of the event
- previous experience and coping skills

See Resources for links to supporting workers after an incident.

Reporting and recording customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour

Managers and team leaders must make sure that all incidents of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour are reported and recorded, using approved systems.

Doing this means:

- the agency is informed of incidents across all workplaces and can monitor trends. Agency resources can then be channelled to where they are most needed
- the agency can develop processes, procedures and resources to address customer behaviour
- staff can be trained to proactively deal with aggressive or counterproductive behaviour
- leaders are informed about incidents, can support staff, and are prompted to follow up

Details about an incident should be recorded as soon as possible. If the staff member is unable to record the details, a manager, team leader, or other staff member should record the incident. More detail can be added later.

Incidents outside of work

Customer aggression incidents include the following examples:

- stalking
- being approached and harassed by a member of the public outside of work
- staff being harassed using any social media platform because of their position with the agency

Any staff member who is concerned that a customer might obtain their full name should speak to their supervisor. For example, a
s 47E(d)

When a staff member is stalked or approached and harassed by a member of the public off site, see Customer aggression Response.

When a customer contacts a staff member through a non official digital channel, see Customer aggression Prevention and management.

See the Resources page for a link to the personal security intranet page, including the personal security outside the office checklist.

Working off site

Working off site covers all work undertaken by staff away from the agency's sites, including the use of mobile devices. This includes:

- out servicing
- travel for work purposes
- working in a public place or a third party site
- working from home

Working off site can present unique security risks. Managers with staff who work off site must consider:

- the security risks of the environments in which their staff operate
- the type of information that will be used
- how that information will be accessed.

The potential hazards of working off site can vary and may have a significant effect on security requirements. A risk assessment will help identify the risks that apply to each individual situation.

See the Resources page for a link to the agency's off-site safety information, including checklists and guidelines.

Critical incidents

A critical workplace incident, also known as a traumatic event, is any incident that brings out a strong emotional response in a person. It can affect a staff member's mental health and can happen immediately or be delayed.

Examples of critical incidents include:

- serious injury or death of someone in, or connected to, the workplace
- a bomb threat or hostage situation
- a serious fire or emergency
- a person self-harming or talking about suicide/self-harm
- a person threatening, attempting to, or taking their own life

The Staff Distress Response Toolkit is to be utilised to support staff during or after a critical incident. The toolkit provides a step by step guide to help managers respond with skill, respect and warmth to someone in distress.

See Resources for contact details and resources available to support staff following a critical incident.

Notifiable incidents

Some types of incidents must be reported to Comcare, the agency's work health and safety regulator. These are known as notifiable incidents. They are:

- when someone dies, whether they are a worker, contractor or member of the public
- a serious injury or illness
- a dangerous incident that exposes any person to a serious risk, even if no one is injured

Managers must immediately make a report in Our Safety, and no later than 24 hours after the incident. Our Safety will automatically:

- tell them if the incident is notifiable
- notify WHS Delivery
- notify Comcare directly

Preserve the site of the incident and do not disturb it until a Comcare inspector advises otherwise.

See Resources for more information about notifiable incidents, a link to Our Safety, and a notifiable incident checklist for managers.

The Resources page has links to:

- contacts
- Customer Incident Management System (CIMS)
- Customer Incident Reporting Tool (CIRT)
- Our Safety
- Comcare
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Intranet

Related links

Customer aggression   Prevention and management

Customer aggression   Response

Customer aggression   Managed Service Plan (MSP)

Customer aggression   Reporting and recording incidents

Customer aggression   Escalating incidents

Family and domestic violence

Customers talking about suicide or self-harm

Social work services

Notification Alert

Process

Where there is, an immediate concern for the safety of a person, immediate danger or risk of harm:
- Call **000** and ask for Police
- Escalate as appropriate
- Stay with the person until support is given

Refer to the Staff Distress Response Toolkit. For general support outside of work hours, staff can contact the Employee Assistance Program or call Lifeline on **131 114**.

This document provides information for managers to support staff following an incident of customer aggression or counterproductive behaviour. For more information on preventing and managing customer aggression, see Customer aggression - Prevention and management.

On this page:

Immediate, short term, and ongoing support to staff

Additional support for staff

Immediate, short term, and ongoing support to staff

Table 1

Action	Description
Manager responsibilities after a critical incident	**Immediate responsibilities** + Read more ... After an incident, managers are responsible for coordinating an immediate response. All people who were involved in, or who may be affected by the incident should receive support.

Managers should consult with their regional manager or equivalent for guidance and support.

See the Resources page for information about supporting workers after a critical incident.

Managers who were personally involved in the incident should consider asking another manager to coordinate the response.

Managers must make sure that the incident response is coordinated before workers leave the workplace.

Managers may also:

- get help from the Social Work Services branch to support affected customers or workers, and/or
- encourage staff to contact a Mental Health First Aid Officer (MHFAO) if they're experiencing distress or need someone to talk to

If the incident involved the potential transmission of a communicable disease, see the Resources page for a link to Infectious and communicable diseases and Infection control.

Immediate support – communication + Read more ...

Give staff factual information about the incident and next steps. The method of communication needs to be suitable for the site, nature of the incident and worker needs.

Managers may need to:

- hold a brief meeting
- summarise the incident and give clear details about the known circumstances. Stick to the facts and don't make assumptions
- ask for questions from staff, and answer them if possible
- discuss issues of concern
- draw up an action plan for supporting staff, taking into account the needs of individuals
- make short-term plans for managing any workload issues, if required
- tell staff about the critical incident services available through EAP
- inform staff about the role of the Mental Health First Aid Officer (MHFAO). They can provide initial support and connect staff to support options and encourage professional help (if needed)

Immediate support - practical and emotional + Read more ...

In the first few hours after an incident, getting support from a manager can reduce initial distress, address basic needs and promote calm.

Managers can give practical and emotional support to staff after an incident by:

- making sure the person knows they're now safe
- reassuring them that distress after a stressful incident is expected
- asking what they need and helping to meet their needs
- asking if they would like to contact EAP or their doctor. See Resources page for a link to EAP intranet page
- if the worker wants to keep working, consider:
  - whether this is appropriate
  - what duties or location may be suitable
  - what you can do to support them
- help staff to complete their reports as soon as possible, while events are still fresh in their mind. Managers should complete the reports if the staff member cannot do so. See Customer aggression: Reporting and recording incidents
- review the personal security information on the intranet and consider contacting the Physical Security Operations Team for advice
- consider whether a security guard may need to accompany a staff member to their car or a taxi at the end of the day
- acknowledge each staff member's experience and reactions:
  - reassure them that different responses to an incident are valid and normal
  - remind them that you are available for support any time they need it, even if they do not want to speak about it now

	◦ remind them that they may experience further emotional, physical, and psychological reactions to the incident in the coming days, weeks and months
Short-term support	**Short term considerations** + Read more ... Consider alternative duties or an alternate work location. Discuss timeframes for breaks and check in with staff before they return to their normal duties. Talk with staff about the post-incident response.

Ongoing support and monitoring	**Ongoing support** + Read more ...
	
	Each staff member's response and recovery after an incident will vary. Managers should periodically check in with their staff and provide ongoing support. Giving practical and emotional support in the days and weeks following an incident will help in their recovery.
	
	Ongoing practical support + Read more ...
	
	Managers can give practical support to staffby:
	
	• asking what support they need
	• encouraging them to use, or continue to use, helpful coping strategies including:
	• getting plenty of rest
	• eating well
	• exercising
	• doing things they find relaxing and enjoyable
	• connecting with their social supports
	• acknowledging their work achievements and contributions
	• helping them to work towards their regular routine
	• encouraging them to ask for professional help if they continue to have difficulty
	• considering workplace adjustments. See Resources page for a link to the Workplace Adjustment intranet page
	
	Managers must make sure staff know they can seek support at any time after an incident through a number of channels. These include:
	
	• counselling outside of EAP through Early Intervention, from a referral from their own doctor, or counselling services in the community
	• Mental Health First Aid Officers (MHFAO) who can help with initial support, listen and maintain privacy, connect with support options, and encourage professional help (if needed0
	• using helplines outside of Services Australia. See Staff distress help for more information , such as Lifeline
	• asking the Employment Law and FOI branch for help with:
	    ◦ additional support when providing a statement
	    ◦ attending a police interview
	    ◦ getting legal assistance for protection orders
	    ◦ See Resources for a link to Legal issues – Customer aggression intranet page.
	• advice from HR. See Resources for a link to the HR Support intranet page
	
	Ongoing emotional support + Read more ...
	
	The worker may or may not want to talk about their experience or feelings. If they want to talk, check if they would like a support person present.
	
	Managers should consider the following tips for providing emotional support:
	
	• Choose a time to talk in private when neither person feels rushed or tired.
	• Ask how they are, for example, 'would it be helpful to talk about things?' or 'how are you going?'
	• Listen, and show listening by repeating what they heard. For example: 'it sounds like...', 'did I understand right that you....'
	• Acknowledge their distress by saying things like 'I can see you are very upset right now. That is understandable given what has just happened'
	• If they are distressed, reassure them that distress is to be expected. Remind them they may need time and space to process it

	Remember that leaders and MHFAOs are not to give staff counselling type support. If a staff member presents in distress, the expectation is that leaders respond quickly and appropriately to provide safety, calm and comfort. An appropriate response is to be present, respectful, thoughtful and genuine and allow the person to know they are supported as they work through their distress. Responding this way can help staff to feel safe, supported and connected. Early response and connection increases access to support services Tell staff about any post incident customer management, such as: • phone contact • warning letters • Managed Service Plans • Notification Alert activated Include prevention and management of customer aggression as a regular agenda item in team meetings, This will: • promote the importance of recording incidents • show the agency is actively addressing the prevention, recovery and response to customer aggression • promote available support • give staff the chance to discuss what they learn from incidents focus on what staff did well in addressing the issue Use regular coaching sessions to discuss staff wellbeing and support options. The manager may observe trends relating to the number, frequency or type of incidents occurring at a site or with individual customers. The manager should flag this with the relevant CANOC. The CANOC can provide data to support consideration of: • the need for increased security, such as having a security guard) • further staff support • Managed Service Plans • staff training
Review Emergency Response Procedures	**Consider scheduling a review of aggression procedures** + Read more ... Managers should consider scheduling reviews of the Emergency Response Procedures - Aggression with the Aggression Response Team (ART). These should be reviewed at least once a year. Discuss any changes (other than to personnel or contact numbers) with the Physical Security Operations Team. See Resources for a link to the Emergency Response Procedures - Aggression (ERPAs).

Additional support for staff

Table 2

Action	Description
Incidents involving serious injury, illness, or death	**Notify Comcare of serious incidents** + Read more ... Comcare must be notified about any death of a person, a serious injury or illness, or a dangerous incident. Other state or territory regulators may also need to be notified depending on the nature of the incident. This notification must be completed as soon as possible after the incident. See Resources for information about notifiable WHS incidents and a manager's checklist for incident notifications to Comcare. **Sudden illness or injury** If the staff member has left the workplace due to illness or injury, the manager must check on them using: • a direct phone call to the person • the Emergency Contact recorded in s 47E(d)

	First aid and ambulances
	
	Contact a First Aid Officer (FAO) to help with initial health care and basic life support for anyone who needs it.
	
	If a staff member needs an ambulance due to customer aggression, the agency will pay for their costs.
	
	Record injury or illness in Our Safety
	
	Managers must make sure the staff member completes an incident report in Our Safety, giving as much detail as possible. If the affected staff member cannot complete this form because of their injury or illness, the manager should do so on their behalf.
	
	See the Resources page for information about:
	
	• injury, illness and near miss reports in Our Safety
	• customer aggression reports in CIMS and CIRT
	
	Death in an agency workplace
	
	It is very rare for a death to occur at an agency workplace. However, in the unlikely event that someone dies, do **all** of the following:
	
	• follow any appropriate emergency procedures and escalation processes
	• call Comcare immediately on 1300 366 979, because an urgent investigation may be required
	• email WHS Delivery. Refer to the Health and Safety Branch intranet page
	• report the incident in writing, either by:
	    ◦ making an incident report in Our Safety, which will automatically go through to Comcare
	    ◦ notifying Comcare directly - see Resources for a link to their forms
	• secure the scene of the incident
	• **Note**: Notify and report these incidents immediately, even if some of the details are unknown (such as the person's name). Make a separate notification for each person that dies.
	
	There is advice for managers on the Resources page, in:
	
	• WHS notifiable incidents
	• Incident notification to Comcare - Manager's checklist
	
	If in doubt, call Comcare directly. For advice contact the WHS Delivery team, under Health and safety branch contacts.

Regional Security Advisers and Security Incident Reports	**Regional Security Advisers (RSAs)** + Read more ... Regional Security Advisers (RSAs) are outposted members of the Physical Security team who can provide security advice and support following a customer aggression incident. This includes: • liaising with the police • post incident reviews • supporting managers with advice on CCTV, intruder, and duress alarm protocols • obtaining an image of the customer from the CCTV footage to upload to CIMS and trigger a Notification Alert • advising about personal security risks **Contact local RSAs** Contact the Services Australia Security Hotline. **Centrelink** The Customer Incident Management System (CIMS) will automatically send an email to the Physical Security team notifying them of the details of an incident when certain characteristics are recorded, s 47E(d) For a Guide to CIMS emails, Incident emails and MSP emails, see the Resources page of Accessing and using the Customer Incident Management System (CIMS).

	Child Support and Medicare The Customer Incident Recording Tool (CIRT) will automatically send an email to the Physical Security team notifying them of the details of an incident when certain conditions apply. See the Resources page for a link to CIRT.
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	**All staff** + Read more ... The agency has a responsibility to support staff who experience emotional impactful event. All affected staff, contractors and labour hire staff should be offered support through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The agency's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider is TELUS Health. For staff support resources, both withing and external to the agency, refer to the Health and Wellbeing Hub
Reporting customer aggression	**Reporting** + Read more ... Managers should make sure that staff understand why recording an incident is important and that recording needs to occur as soon as possible following an incident. **Reporting for APS staff** Staff must record an incident in Our Safety if they are affected by an incident either: • physically • psychologically Details of customer aggression and counterproductive behaviour must be reported using the relevant approved system. For more information, see Customer aggression – reporting and recording incidents. **Reporting for non APS including customers, contractors or staff from other agencies** Any staff member can report customer aggression incidents involving third parties in Our Safety. This applies to labour hire staff, contractors, customers, and visitors.
Incident and injury report: follow-up requirements	**Manager reports and escalation in Our Safety** + Read more ... When a staff member completes an incident report in Our Safety, the nominated manager will get an automatic notification asking them to complete the manager's review. The manager will then: • log into Our Safety and open their dashboard • complete the manager's section • review the record to make sure that all the necessary sections are complete The manager must complete their review within 2 days. They will get automated notifications to follow up on progress and deadlines if they do not complete the task within the timeframes. Once the manager's report is complete, a triage team in People Support will review the report. Depending on the details in the incident form, they will get the relevant teams involved. Incidents may require further action. This may include an investigation into the incident. Offer practical and emotional support to the affected staff members and tell them about the available support services. See Resources for: • manager support after a critical incident • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) • Work Health and Safety incident reporting information
Customer management to reduce future risk to	**Review the future risk** + Read more ...

staff and others	Review the customer's record, including previous incidents, to assess the risk posed by the customer and likelihood of future aggression. For more information about post incident follow up, see [Customer aggression Post incident contact.]
Early intervention	**The People Support teams manage early intervention** + Read more ... Early Intervention Procedures are used to: • identify the early signs of work related injury or illness • take quick and effective action to support staff This in turn leads to: • prevention of long term absence from the workplace and the development of chronic illness • a positive and supportive workplace culture • recognition of staff and the value of their contribution to the workplace • reduction of worker's compensation costs If a staff member cannot work because of an incident, their manager should liaise with People Support to discuss early intervention. The program will be developed with input from the worker's treating practitioners. Keep in contact with the staff member if they are absent from the workplace. Ongoing communication with the worker is part of the agency's duty of care and allows the manager and staff member to remain connected. Remember to ask what support they need from their leaders and workplace. Contact the People Advisory Centre (PAC) on s 47E(d) . They will advise the appropriate People Support Team to help support affected staff.
Protection orders between staff and customers	**Risk assessment** + Read more ... In some situations, a staff member may inform the agency that they hold a protection order against a customer. This is to prevent contact due to a risk of family or personal violence. In those circumstances, the agency should conduct a risk assessment to understand more about the situation. After assessing the situation, and s 47E(d) the agency may determine that a Managed Service Plan (MSP) is necessary. For more information, see: • Proposing, recording and approving a Managed Service Plan (MSP) • Family and domestic violence - Intranet

References

Legislation

Links to the Federal Register of Legislation site go to an 'All versions' page. Select the 'Latest' version.

Ombudsman Act 1976

Privacy Act 1988

Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971 (POPPPA)

WHS terms and definitions, including a reference library database

Resources

Our Safety (WHS information management system)

Our Safety - for all incidents that result in injury, illness and or harm (physical or psychological)

Comcare

Notifiable work health and safety (WHS) incidents, including the manager's checklist and Timeframes for notifying Comcare

Incident notification forms

Intranet links

Corporate Services Legal Branch Employment Law Team

Creating a mentally healthy workplace hub

Customer Aggression Prevention Hub

Early intervention procedures

Emergency Response Procedures Aggression (ERPAs) including s 47E(d)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Health and Safety Branch

Health and Safety Hub

Health and Wellbeing Hub

Incident management and escalation policy

Infectious and communicable diseases

Injury and Illness Management Policy

Mental Health First Aid Officers

Personal security

Security Incident Reporting

Staff distress help

Staff Distress Response Toolkit

Working away from the office

Working from home safety

Work Health and Safety incident reporting

Workplace Adjustment

WHS Delivery team contacts

WHS Terms and Definitions