

## WRITING EFFECTIVE INCIDENT REPORTS

After reviewing this Incident Report information, you should be able to:

1. Recognize when you must complete an Incident Report
2. Identify information required on an Incident Report
3. Write an effective Incident Report

Incident Reports are a way to assure all unusual incidents, involving recipients, is documented and reported in a timely manner.

Instances when filing an Incident Report *is required* are as follows:

- Death of a recipient
- Any injury of a recipient, explained or unexplained
- An unusual medical problem (i.e.: dizzy, fainting, shortness of breath...)
- Environmental emergencies or incidents that could have caused an injury, but did not do so (i.e.: fire alarm went off and residents had to evacuate, tornado warning alert and residents had to go to tornado area of home, chemical spill, flooding in home, etc.)
- Problem behaviors not addressed in a Behavior Treatment Plan (BTP) (i.e. harm to self, harm to others, verbal aggression, property damage, etc.)
- Inappropriate sexual acts (i.e. peer-to-peer touching, inappropriately touching staff, etc.)
- Medication errors: Missed dose, lower dose, early dose, late dose
- Medication refusals...REMEMBER – Recipient can **NOT** be forced to take medications
- Suspected criminal offenses involving the recipient (i.e. arrests, convictions, probations violations, detention, etc.)
- Use of Physical Intervention (PI)...REMEMBER....***You must***
  - Identify the imminent risk (i.e. harm to self, staff or others)
  - Identify what less restrictive interventions were tried first and were unsuccessful
  - Identify the ***approved*** PI technique used
  - Identify how long (<1 minute, 5 minutes, etc.) the recipient was held in the approved PI technique
- Significant events in the community involving a recipient
- Traffic accident, fire or police involvement with a recipient

### **Effective Incident Reports:**

Effective Incident Reports provide a way of documenting all unusual incidents that occur. In addition, Incident Reports help assure the recipients are receiving treatment that is suited to their needs. They help to identify patterns of behavior that may require intervention by the recipient's treatment team. Incident Reports help identify agency-wide or program specific problems (i.e. safety issues) that need to be addressed. They also help identify areas where staff training needs to be developed.

Effective Incident Reports need to be clearly written. They should be written so a person that is not involved in the incident can understand what happened. Effective Incident Reports identify the facts and observations. They avoid inclusion of personal biases; they do not draw conclusions/predictions, or place blame. Effective Incident Reports use specific, descriptive language and identified the action(s) taken by staff as a result of the unusual incident. All Incident Reports need to be written within 24 hours. They also need to be signed, dated and routed to the Office of Recipient Rights.