

Australian Capital Territory

# Corrections Management (Incident Reporting and Notifications) Policy 2026

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made under the

Corrections Management Act 2007, s14 (Corrections policies and operating procedures)

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## 1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Corrections Management (Incident Reporting and Notifications) Policy 2026*.

## 2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

## 3 Policy

I make this policy to facilitate the effective and efficient management of correctional services.

## 4 Revocation

This instrument revokes the *Corrections Management (Incident Reporting, Notifications and Debriefs) Policy 2020* [NI 2020-642].

Leanne Close <sup>APM</sup>  
Commissioner  
ACT Corrective Services

13 April 2026

# INCIDENT REPORTING AND NOTIFICATIONS

POLICY NO. 26

ACT CORRECTIVE SERVICES



**ACT**  
Government

Justice and Community Safety

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## 1 PURPOSE

This policy establishes clear guidelines and obligations when reporting incidents and conducting associated notifications. Consistent, reliable, and timely reporting and notification of incidents supports confidence in ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS).

## 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to ACTCS staff and contracted service providers.

Divisional Executives may establish operating procedures under this policy.

Incident response is out of scope of this policy.

## 3 DEFINITIONS

### **Business day**

A day that is not:

- a. Saturday or Sunday, or
- b. a public holiday in the ACT.

### **Critical incident**

As defined in the Dictionary of the *Custodial Inspector Act 2017*. Critical incidents only relate to correctional centres or detainees.

### **Debrief**

A structured discussion or review of an incident that checks on the welfare of those involved and enables learning through reflection by sharing experiences, gathering information, and developing ideas for the future.

### **Emergency**

An event that arises internally or from external sources which may adversely affect the occupants or visitors in a facility, and which requires an immediate response.

### **Illicit substance**

A controlled drug or prohibited substance within the meaning of the *Poisons Standard* (the SUSMP) (Cth), *Criminal Code 2002* (ACT), or the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008* (ACT), that has not been lawfully prescribed or supplied.

**Incident** An event that may cause a threat to the personal safety of staff, detainees, clients or others, and/or presents a threat to the security of a correctional centre or safety of the community.

**Information Communication Technology (ICT) Incident** An ICT incident occurs when:

- a. any ICT System is down, and affecting multiple users
- b. any ICT System is not behaving in the expected manner and affecting multiple users
- c. there is a loss of ICT hardware, including a laptop, USB/CD storage device, etc
- d. there is a data breach, or an accidental or unauthorised deletion, loss, sharing or other unplanned release of official information, personal information, data, reports or documents.

**Notifiable Incident** An incident which may have significant consequences to individuals, divisions of ACTCS, or all of ACTCS and requires additional levels of notification. Notifiable incidents may:

- a. involve the serious injury or death of a person on ACTCS property or worksite
- b. involve a serious security breach
- c. place staff, detainees, clients, or visitors under significant risk
- d. place the security of a correctional centre under significant risk
- e. place the safety of the community at risk
- f. generate significant public or media scrutiny.

**Notification** Advising (verbally or in writing) relevant people or roles that an incident has occurred.

**Reporting** Documenting the details of the incident and action taken in writing.

**Work Health and Safety (WHS) Incident** Unexpected work-related event or occurrence that results in an injury or illness to a worker or has the potential to do so in the future. This includes both physical and psychological injuries or illnesses. Hazardous

situations and near miss events are considered incidents for the purpose of reporting.

**Worksite**

Any place where ACTCS employees attend for the functions of their duties, including, but not limited to, hospitals, community service work sites, external reporting sites, home visits, and court.

## **4 PRINCIPLES**

- 4.1 Incident reporting is a fundamental obligation for all ACTCS staff and is critical to maintaining safety, security, and operational integrity within the custodial and community corrections environment. Accurate incident reporting ensures transparency, supports risk management and enables informed decision-making.
- 4.2 All ACTCS staff and contractors must report and notify incidents in accordance with this policy and related operating procedures.
- 4.3 A consistent, systematic and professional approach is crucial to manage and report incidents. This includes notifying relevant stakeholders in a timely manner, accurately recording the incident and reviewing what happened.
- 4.4 Prompt notification supports an effective organisational approach to appropriate recovery actions, and ensures timely investigation, transparency, and adherence to statutory and procedural obligations.
- 4.5 Early identification of risks enables continuous improvement and reduces the likelihood of accidents.
- 4.6 Effective incident reporting assists ACTCS to identify opportunities to reduce operational risks and strengthen the safety, security and welfare of detainees, clients, staff, visitors and contractors.
- 4.7 Timely reporting of WHS workplace incidents, near misses, or hazardous situations is critical to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. Prompt submission ensures risks are identified and addressed quickly, supporting compliance with work health and safety obligations.
- 4.8 ACTCS acknowledges that incidents may be traumatic to those involved and those who review the events afterwards. Appropriate interventions and services to support staff, detainees, and clients after the incident must be provided as needed.

## 5 INCIDENT REPORTING

### Incident reports

- 5.1 Reporting all incidents, including any use of force incidents, must be recorded in the offender management system in accordance with established operating procedures.
- 5.2 Incident reports must be an accurate record of what occurred, the actions taken and decisions made to assist internal and external reviews and allows ACTCS to monitor and detect patterns of behaviour.
- 5.3 Accurate records of incidents assists ACTCS staff to demonstrate links between detainee or client behaviour and actions taken by ACTCS staff, including breach of an order, discipline charge, or Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) review.
- 5.4 Where an *Incident Report* is required, every ACTCS staff member who responded to or witnessed the incident (including support areas e.g. Facilities Management) must complete an independent account of the incident in an *Incident Report*.
- 5.5 When an *Incident Report* is sent to a senior staff member in the offender management system, the senior staff member must assess whether to escalate the incident report further up the chain of command, or any other action required.
- 5.6 The senior staff member is responsible for assessing each *Incident Report*. If an *Incident Report* does not comply with the minimum incident reporting requirements, the senior staff member must advise the author and ensure the report is amended in line with the minimum reporting requirements as outlined in the *Incident Reporting and Notification Operating Procedure* or the *Safety, Security and Incident Reporting in the Community Operating Procedure*.

### Work Health and Safety reporting

- 5.7 Staff or their manager/supervisor must submit an online incident report through [SafetyPortal](#) within 48 hours of any incident, near miss or hazardous situation occurring in the workplace. Further information can be found on the [ACT Public Service \(ACTPS\) SafetyPortal SharePoint](#).
- 5.8 A SafetyPortal report should be submitted even if an injury (physical or psychological) did **not** occur from the incident, near miss or hazardous situation. This will help prevent future harm and strengthen workplace safety systems.
- 5.9 Reporting incidents and near misses supports safety and helps reduce accidents and injuries, in accordance with the [JACS Work Health & Safety Incident Management Standard Operating Procedure](#), [ACTPS Responding to Workplace](#)

[Accidents/Incidents Policy, JACS Managing Occupational Violence Standard Operating Procedure](#), and the [ACTPS Reporting of Work Health and Safety Incidents Policy](#).

## 6 INCIDENT NOTIFICATIONS

- 6.1 Incidents outlined in [Appendix A – Incident Categories and Definitions](#) must be brought to the immediate attention of a relevant manager via the chain of command.
- 6.2 Not all incidents will reach the threshold of a notifiable incident. Staff are expected to use their professional judgement and refer to appropriate operating procedures and [Appendix A – Incident Categories and Definitions](#) to determine if the incident needs to be treated as a notifiable incident. When in doubt, treat the incident as a notifiable incident.

### Notifiable Incidents

- 6.3 The relevant manager must assess the situation to determine if the incident should be classified as notifiable. Incident definitions and when to report them as notifiable is outlined in [Appendix A – Incident Categories and Definitions](#).
- 6.4 All notifiable incidents must be escalated immediately via the chain of command and in accordance with the [Incident Reporting and Notification Operating Procedure](#) or the [Safety, Security and Incident Reporting in the Community Operating Procedure](#).
- 6.5 The Commissioner must be notified by the relevant manager within 60 minutes of the conclusion of the notifiable incident, or as soon as is practicable in the event of an ongoing situation.
- 6.6 These notifications must be completed in addition to completing an [Incident Report](#) on the offender management system and the Safety Portal report outlined in section 5.

## 7 EXTERNAL NOTIFICATIONS

- 7.1 ACTCS is obliged to report some incidents to external agencies and statutory reporting bodies under legislation or agreements.
- 7.2 In addition to sections 7.3 to 7.8, the Commissioner must determine the requirement for further external notifications, including, but not limited to:
- a. JACS Executive



- b. Minister for Corrections
- c. ACT Health
- d. JACS Media
- e. ACT Insurance Agency
- f. Australian Institute of Criminology.

### **ACT Custodial Inspector**

- 7.3 The ACTCS Commissioner has a statutory obligation to report a critical incident to the Inspector of Correctional Services as soon as practicable in accordance with section 17 of the *Custodial Inspector Act 2017 (ACT)*.
- 7.4 A critical incident includes any of the following occurring in a correctional centre, or in the provision of correctional services:
- a. the death of a person
  - b. a person's life being endangered
  - c. an escape from custody
  - d. a person being taken hostage
  - e. a riot that results in significant disruption to a centre or service
  - f. a fire that results in significant property damage
  - g. an assault or use of force that results in a person being admitted to a hospital
  - h. any other incident identified as a critical incident by a relevant Minister or relevant director-general.
- 7.5 The Inspector of Correctional Services can review a critical incident on the Inspector's own initiative or as requested by a relevant Minister or relevant Director-General in accordance with section 18(1)(c) of the *Custodial Inspector Act 2017*.

### **Police**

- 7.6 Divisional Executives are responsible for ensuring that ACT Policing are immediately notified via phone of any serious incident, including but not limited to:
- a. a death in custody
  - b. any incident involving injury to a detainee, whether self-inflicted or caused by another person that, under the circumstances, may lead to the death of a detainee
  - c. alleged assaults against a detainee, staff member, or person in a correctional centre, including all alleged sexual assaults

- d. any bomb threat
  - e. active concerted indiscipline or detainee disturbances
- 7.7 ACTCS staff must report to ACT Policing any incident where a suspected illicit substance is located on an ACTCS premises.

### **WorkSafe ACT**

- 7.8 The ACTCS Commissioner has a statutory obligation under section 38 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act) to notify the regulator (WorkSafe ACT) immediately after becoming aware of a WHS incident that is considered notifiable under section 35.
- 7.9 Section 35 of the WHS Act describes a WHS notifiable incident as:
- a. the death of a person
  - b. a serious injury or illness of a person
  - c. a dangerous incident
  - d. a sexual assault incident.
- 7.10 In addition to WorkSafe ACT being notified of WHS notifiable incidents involving ACTCS workers, notification may also be required if a detainee is involved in a dangerous incident, as defined under section 37 of the WHS Act, or if the detainee is employed by ACTCS within the AMC.
- 7.11 Further information and guidance regarding incidents notifiable to WorkSafe ACT can be found in the JACS Notifiable Incident Standard Operating Procedure.

## **8 DEATH OF A DETAINEE OR CLIENT**

- 8.1 A death of a detainee is a notifiable incident, a critical incident and a WHS notifiable incident, and requires immediate notification to appropriate staff and authorities in accordance with the Death in Custody and Community Operating Procedure.
- 8.2 A death of a client at a community corrections office, or while performing community service work, is a notifiable incident and a WHS notifiable incident, and requires immediate notification to appropriate staff and authorities in accordance with the Death in Custody and Community Operating Procedure.
- 8.3 When undertaking notifications, the identity of the deceased must remain confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis. Staff must only share this

information with individuals or teams who require it to perform their designated functions following the death.

- 8.4 As a public authority, ACTCS is obliged to ensure a prompt and effective investigation, including into its own conduct, when a person dies while in ACTCS' care. Aside from any other legal responsibility, the right to life as protected under section 9 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*, may be engaged following a death of a detainee or client.

## **9 ICT INCIDENTS**

- 9.1 Prompt notification and reporting of ICT incidents is essential to protect the integrity, security, and continuity of ACTCS systems and services. Early reporting enables timely investigation and resolution, minimises disruption to business operations, and keep sensitive information safe.
- 9.2 If a staff member identifies an ICT incident, they should notify their manager in the first instance and report in accordance with the *ICT Incident Management Operating Procedure*.
- 9.3 ICT incidents involving a breach of personal information may be reported to the Information Privacy Commissioner (IPC) by the relevant Divisional Executive, in line with the JACS *Data Breach Standard Operating Procedure*.

## **10 MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE**

- 10.1 The Office of the Commissioner is responsible for preparing ministerial briefing notes as requested by the Commissioner following an incident.
- 10.2 Incident-related ministerial briefings must be finalised no later than by close of the next business day following the incident, noting further briefings may be required.

## **11 POST INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

- 11.1 Incidents can be a stressful experience for staff, detainees and clients. Divisional Executives are responsible for ensuring that appropriate supports are in place for staff, detainees and clients to access as required.
- 11.2 Where practical, staff members involved in an incident may be provided the opportunity to complete the remainder of their duty period in a different location to where the incident occurred.

- 11.3 A discussion with a manager should be undertaken about rostered shifts on subsequent days to ensure wellbeing of staff is maintained, noting fatigue management requirements under relevant Enterprise Agreements.
- 11.4 The relevant manager is responsible for ensuring that all relevant reports are completed prior to staff leaving the workplace at the end of their shift, including Safety Portal notifications.
- 11.5 The relevant manager must ensure any relevant post-incident checklists are followed and completed.

### **Wellbeing**

- 11.6 In the event of a notifiable incident, or other incident as considered appropriate by the relevant manager, the Wellbeing team must be notified by the relevant manager via phone.
- 11.7 The Wellbeing team may arrange for appropriate support for staff in accordance with the *Peer Support Officer Policy* and the *Wellbeing Factsheet*.

### **Debriefs**

- 11.8 Debriefing is required for most incidents, is essential following serious incidents, and must be conducted in accordance with the *Debrief Guidance*.
- 11.9 An immediate (hot) debrief must occur following the response to all incidents where there is:
  - a. a physical injury to a staff member in a custodial or community corrections setting
  - b. suicide attempt or death in custody
  - c. assault on staff
  - d. detainee on detainee assault
  - e. any event that would reasonably be expected to traumatise or adversely impact staff wellbeing
  - f. any event that presents a significant threat or risk to staff members.
- 11.10 A formal (cold) debrief must occur where there has been a:
  - a. serious assault
  - b. death in custody
  - c. death of a staff member in the workplace
  - d. escape from custody
  - e. act of concerted ill-discipline
  - f. hostage situation.

- 11.11 Immediate and formal debriefs can occur for additional incidents, as required.
- 11.12 Debriefs should include all available staff and stakeholders that were involved in the response to the incident, both within ACTCS/JACS and other agencies as relevant (for example AMC Facilities Management, Canberra Health Services, ACT Policing, Emergency Services Agency, etc).

## **12 ASSURANCE**

- 12.1 Any completed hot and formal debriefing forms following an incident must be sent to the Executive Officer Operational Support for tracking and monitoring ACTCS' progress on recommendations or commitments made.
- 12.2 Any internal reviews conducted following an incident may be conducted with outcomes reported on and any resulting recommendations tracked and monitored for implementation.
- 12.3 Where external reviews or reports of incidents are undertaken, agreed recommendations must be tracked and monitored to support accountability and continuous improvement.

## **13 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Accident and Incident Reporting Standard Operating Procedure
- ACT Public Service Reporting of Work Health and Safety Incidents Policy
- ACTPS Code of Ethics
- AMC Emergency Management Plan
- Appendix A – Incident Categories and Definitions
- Custodial Inspector Act 2017 (ACT)
- Death in Custody and Community Operating Procedure
- Debrief Guidance
- Ethical Conduct Policy
- ICT Incident Management Operating Procedure
- Incident Reporting and Notifications Operating Procedure
- JACS Data Breach Standard Operating Procedure
- Notifiable Incident Standard Operating Procedure
- Peer Support Officer Policy
- Preventing and Managing Occupational Violence in the Workplace Policy
- Reporting of Work Health and Safety Incidents Policy

- Safety, Security and Incident Reporting in the Community Operating Procedure
- Work Health & Safety Incident Management Standard Operating Procedure
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

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 Commissioner  
 ACT Corrective Services  
 13 April 2026

### Document details

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