

Incident Management Procedure

Responding to, reporting and learning from incidents, injuries and near misses

Document no.	DFMP-WHS-P01	Related form	DFMP-WHS-F01 Incident Report Form (Word, or online at wkf.ms/4hZNHIB)
Version	2.0	Effective date	October 2026
Owner	Managing Director	Approved by	Managing Director (operational procedure)
Applies to	All employees, volunteers, foster carers, interns, board members and contractors	Next review	October 2027, or sooner after a serious incident or change in law

In an emergency: make it safe, call **000**, then phone the Managing Director. **Every incident, injury, near miss and hazard gets reported within 24 hours.**



Report an incident online

This is the quickest way to report. Your report goes straight to the Managing Director.

Scan the QR code with your phone camera, or go to wkf.ms/4hZNHIB

Works on any phone or computer. No login needed. You can upload photos and save a draft.

1. Purpose

The people who rely on Don't Forget My Pet are often going through the hardest moments of their lives: illness, family violence, homelessness, financial hardship or isolation. Our volunteers and staff step into homes, police stations and community spaces to keep people and their pets together. Doing that safely matters to everyone.

This procedure explains what to do when something goes wrong, or nearly does. It makes sure:

- people get help quickly, and the scene is made safe;
- incidents are reported consistently and on time;
- we meet our legal duties, including notifying WorkSafe Victoria and our insurers;
- the people involved are supported afterwards; and
- we learn from every incident so it does not happen again.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to everyone who works or volunteers for Don't Forget My Pet, in every location and program: Safety Net Foster Care, In-Home Support, the Pet Food Bank, transport and van use, pet handovers, pet support nights, events and fundraisers, office and storage work, and online or phone contact.

It covers incidents involving workers, clients, members of the public and pets, including near misses and hazards where nobody was hurt.

3. Legislation and standards

Don't Forget My Pet operates in Victoria, which has its own OHS laws rather than the national model WHS laws. This procedure is built to the following:

Law or standard	What it means for us
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)	Our duty to provide a safe workplace for employees and to not put volunteers, clients or the public at risk (ss 21, 23). Notifying WorkSafe of serious incidents and preserving the scene (ss 37–39).
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic), including the psychological health amendments in force from 1 December 2025	Identifying and controlling hazards, including psychosocial hazards such as aggression, traumatic events and high workload.

Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (Vic)	Injury register and claims process for paid employees.
AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management – Guidelines	The 5x5 likelihood × consequence matrix used to rate every incident.
AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018 Occupational health and safety management systems	Investigation, corrective action and continuous improvement.
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Australian Privacy Principles; Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)	Keeping incident and health information confidential and secure; responding to data breaches.
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards	Responding to and reporting concerns about a child's safety.
Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)	Responding safely to family violence disclosures, and protecting client confidentiality.
Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)	Reporting dog attacks to the local council.
National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (Volunteering Australia)	Volunteer safety, wellbeing and support.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Incident	Any event that caused, or could have caused, harm to a person, a pet, property, information or Don't Forget My Pet's reputation.
Near miss	An event that could have caused harm but did not, e.g. a dog slips its lead near a road but is caught.
Hazard	Anything with the potential to cause harm, e.g. a broken crate latch, a slippery ramp, an aggressive dog in a client's home.
Serious incident	Any incident rated High or Extreme, any notifiable incident, any hospital treatment, any police involvement, any safeguarding concern (family violence, elder abuse, child safety, suicide risk), or the death or loss of a pet in our care.
Notifiable incident	An incident that must be reported to WorkSafe Victoria: a death; medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance; immediate treatment as a hospital in-patient; immediate treatment for amputation, serious head or eye injury, serious burn, de-gloving or scalping, spinal injury, loss of a bodily function or serious laceration; or a dangerous occurrence that exposed someone to immediate risk.
Worker	Employees, volunteers, foster carers, interns, students, board members and contractors.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
All workers	Put safety first and call 000 when needed. Phone the Managing Director immediately about any serious incident. Complete the Incident Report Form within 24 hours, even for near misses. Preserve the scene of a notifiable incident. Cooperate with any investigation and follow corrective actions.
Managing Director	Receives every incident report and is the single point of contact. Rates risk, decides the level of investigation and makes all external notifications (WorkSafe, insurers, OAIC, council). Ensures the people involved are supported and debriefed. Keeps the Incident Register, tracks corrective actions and reports to the Board.
Board of Directors	Oversees safety performance through regular incident reporting. Board Chair is told within 24 hours of any Extreme-rated or notifiable incident.

If the Managing Director cannot be reached within 30 minutes for a serious incident, contact the Board Chair. Never delay calling 000 while trying to reach anyone.

6. The procedure at a glance

1	Respond	Make it safe. Call 000 if needed. Give first aid. Secure any pets.
2	Notify	Serious incident: phone the Managing Director now. Everything else: same day.
3	Report	Complete the Incident Report Form within 24 hours: online (QR code / wkf.ms/4hZNHIB) or in Word.
4	Assess	Managing Director rates the risk and makes any WorkSafe, insurer or other notifications.
5	Investigate	Find the real cause. Timeframe depends on the risk rating.
6	Act	Put controls in place using the hierarchy of controls. Assign owners and dates.
7	Support	Offer a debrief and support to everyone involved. Close the loop with the reporter.
8	Record & review	Enter in the Incident Register. Report trends to the Board. Update policies.

7. Step 1 – Respond

- Check for danger to yourself and others. Do not put yourself at risk to help a person or a pet.
- Call 000 for ambulance, police or fire if anyone is seriously hurt, unwell, threatened or in danger.
- Give first aid within your training. Wash any bite or scratch with soap and running water straight away.
- Secure pets in a crate, car or closed room, away from people and other animals.
- If the incident may be notifiable (see Section 4), do not move or change anything at the scene except to help someone, make the area safe or as directed by police or WorkSafe.
- If you feel unsafe with a client or anyone else, leave. You never have to stay in an unsafe situation.

8. Step 2 – Notify the Managing Director

Type of incident	Tell the Managing Director
Death, hospital treatment, notifiable incident, police attendance, safeguarding concern, pet death or pet lost, vehicle crash, aggression or assault	IMMEDIATELY by phone (do not just text or email)
Injury needing a GP, animal bite that broke the skin, property damage, privacy breach, owner uncontactable	Same day by phone or text
Minor first aid only, near miss, hazard identified	On the Incident Report Form within 24 hours

Managing Director: Alysha | alysha@dontforgetmypet.org.au

9. Step 3 – Complete the Incident Report Form

- Complete the Incident Report Form (DFMP-WHS-F01) within 24 hours, or as soon as you safely can. **The easiest way is online: scan the QR code (on page 1, Appendix A, and in the van, foster carer pack and In-Home Support kit) or go to wkf.ms/4hZNHIB.** The one-page Word form can be used instead and emailed to the Managing Director. If you were injured, someone else can complete it with you.
- Each person directly involved completes their own form. Witnesses can add a statement.
- Write facts, not opinions or blame. Use the exact words people said where it matters.
- Take photos of the scene, injuries (with consent), damage or hazards if it is safe and appropriate. Never photograph a client, their home or a pet without consent, and never post them online.
- Photos can be uploaded in the online form. If using the Word form, email it and any photos to the Managing Director. Do not keep copies on your personal phone or computer once they have been sent.

10. Step 4 – Assess and make notifications

Risk rating

The Managing Director rates each incident on the 5×5 matrix below (AS ISO 31000:2018), based on the worst credible outcome, not just what actually happened. A near miss with a dog off-lead near a road may rate High even though no one was hurt. The rating is recorded in the Incident Register.

Likelihood ↓ / Consequence →	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Rating	Response	Investigation
Extreme	Act immediately. Stop the activity if needed. Tell the Board Chair within 24 hours.	Full investigation, started within 24 hours.
High	Act the same day. Controls in place before the activity continues.	Full investigation, completed within 7 days.
Medium	Act within 14 days.	Desktop review, completed within 14 days.
Low	Manage through normal practice.	Record and monitor for trends.

WorkSafe Victoria (notifiable incidents)

- **Phone WorkSafe immediately on 13 23 60** once you become aware of a notifiable incident.
- **Send written notice within 48 hours** using WorkSafe's online form or the form they provide. Keep a copy for at least 5 years.
- **Preserve the site** until a WorkSafe inspector arrives or says it can be disturbed, except to help an injured person, make it safe or assist police.

Although the duty to notify sits with the employer, Don't Forget My Pet notifies for serious incidents involving volunteers and members of the public in the same way, because they happened at our workplace or during our activities.

Insurers

- **Volunteer personal accident insurance:** notify for any injury to a volunteer, foster carer or intern that needs medical treatment or causes time off.
- **Public liability insurance:** notify for any injury to a client or member of the public, or damage to their property, including a dog bite or attack involving a pet in our care.
- Notify as soon as practicable and within the timeframe in the policy. Never admit liability, promise payment or agree to cover costs at the scene. Be kind, and say the matter will be followed up.

Paid employees

- Record any employee injury in the register of injuries. If the employee makes a WorkCover claim, forward it to our WorkSafe agent within 10 days of receiving it.

11. Specific incident types

These steps are in addition to Steps 1 to 3.

Incident	What to do
Animal bite or scratch	Wash with soap and running water for at least 5 minutes, then apply antiseptic. See a GP the same day if the skin is broken, the wound is on the hand or face, or it shows signs of infection. Ask about a tetanus booster. Record the pet's vaccination status and owner details. Do not place the pet back with that worker until a review is done.
Dog attack on a person or animal	Separate and secure the dog. Get medical or vet help. Report to the local council's animal management team (Domestic Animals Act 1994). The Managing Director makes this report. Notify the public liability insurer.
Exposure to animal illness, waste or parasites (zoonotic)	Wash thoroughly, change clothes and bag them. See a GP and tell them about the animal exposure. Isolate the pet and arrange vet advice. Clean equipment and crates with an appropriate disinfectant.
Aggression, threats or assault	Leave the situation and get to safety. Call 000 if you are threatened or assaulted. Do not return to that client or location until the Managing Director has reviewed the risk. Offer a debrief within 48 hours.
Family violence disclosed or suspected	If anyone is in immediate danger, call 000. Listen, believe and do not judge. Do not confront the person using violence. Offer safe steps (24/7) on 1800 015 188 or 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732. Never share the client's location, story or pet's whereabouts with anyone without the Managing Director's approval and the client's consent.
Elder abuse suspected	Call 000 if the person is in immediate danger. Tell the Managing Director the same day. Seniors Rights Victoria: 1300 368 821.
Child safety concern	If a child is in immediate danger, call 000. Tell the Managing Director immediately. Reports go to Victoria Police or Child Protection (after hours 13 12 78). Do not investigate yourself.
Risk of self-harm or suicide	If someone is at immediate risk, call 000 and stay with them if it is safe to do so. Otherwise, encourage them to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 and tell the Managing Director immediately.
Client unresponsive, missing or deceased	Call 000. Do not enter a property you believe is unsafe. Secure the pet only if it is safe. Phone the Managing Director immediately.
Pet escaped or lost	Search the immediate area straight away. Phone the Managing Director immediately. The Managing Director contacts the owner, local council, vets and lost-pet networks, and approves any public post.
Pet injured, unwell or died in our care	Take the pet to the nearest vet. Phone the Managing Director immediately. The Managing Director tells the owner, with care and in person or by phone, never by text.
Owner uncontactable or did not collect (Safety Net Foster Care)	At a pet handover, leave if the owner is more than 30 minutes late and tell the Managing Director. Follow the Safety Net Foster Care policy for overdue and uncontactable owners.
Vehicle crash	Stop, check for injuries, call 000 if anyone is hurt or the road is blocked. Exchange details. Do not admit fault. Photograph the scene and vehicles. Report to police if anyone is injured or details cannot be exchanged.
Freezer failure or spoiled pet food	Do not distribute any food that may have thawed or been contaminated. Quarantine and label it. Record the temperature and time found, and tell the Managing Director the same day.
Privacy breach or lost device or documents	Tell the Managing Director immediately so access can be locked or the information recovered. The Managing Director assesses whether serious harm is likely and whether the client and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner must be told.

12. Steps 5 and 6 – Investigate and act

Investigations are about learning, not blame. The aim is to find the real reasons something happened: the task, the environment, the equipment, the pet, the information we had, and our own procedures.

- Speak with the people involved and any witnesses, ideally within a few days.
- Look at the scene, photos, client and pet records, and relevant policies.
- Ask "why?" until you reach a cause we can actually fix.
- Record findings, root causes and corrective actions against the incident in the Incident Register.

Choosing controls: the hierarchy of controls

Choose the most effective control that is reasonably practicable, working down the list:

Control	Example
1. Eliminate	Do not place a dog with a known bite history in a foster home with children.
2. Substitute	Use a smaller food container so loads are lighter.
3. Engineering / isolation	Install a crate barrier in the van; replace faulty crate latches.
4. Administrative	Two-person home visits for flagged clients; pet behaviour notes on intake; training.
5. Personal protective equipment	Gloves when handling animal waste; bite-resistant gloves for unknown animals.

13. Step 7 – Support the people involved

Incidents can be upsetting, even when nobody is hurt. Our volunteers often witness hard things in people's lives, and that weight matters.

- The Managing Director checks in with everyone involved within 48 hours of a serious incident and offers a debrief.
- Workers can take time out from duties after an incident, with no pressure to return before they are ready.
- Support services: Lifeline 13 11 14; Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636; 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732.
- The Managing Director tells the person who reported the incident what was found and what is changing.
- No one will be disadvantaged for reporting an incident, hazard or concern in good faith.

14. Step 8 – Records, confidentiality and review

- **Incident Register:** online reports go straight into the Incident Register (monday.com); Word forms are entered by the Managing Director. Each record holds the risk rating, notifications made (with reference numbers), investigation findings, corrective actions, support offered, and close-out date.
- **Storage:** completed forms are stored securely with access limited to the Managing Director and anyone authorised by them. Health and safeguarding information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- **Retention:** keep incident records for at least 7 years. Keep records involving a person under 18 until they turn 25, and WorkSafe notification records for at least 5 years. Keep anything relating to a possible claim or legal matter until it is resolved.
- **Board reporting:** the Managing Director reports incident numbers, trends and open actions to every Board meeting.
- **Review:** this procedure is reviewed every 12 months, after any Extreme or notifiable incident, or when laws change.

Appendix A – Key contacts

Print this page and keep it in the van, the foster carer pack and the In-Home Support kit.



Report an incident online

Report every incident, injury, near miss and hazard within 24 hours.

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Service	Number
Emergency (ambulance, police, fire)	000
Managing Director – Alysha	alysha@dontforgetmypet.org.au
WorkSafe Victoria – notifiable incidents	13 23 60
WorkSafe Victoria – advisory service	1800 136 089
Victoria Police – non-emergency	131 444
safe steps Family Violence Response Centre (24/7)	1800 015 188
1800RESPECT	1800 737 732
Seniors Rights Victoria	1300 368 821
Child Protection – after hours	13 12 78
Lifeline	13 11 14
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636
Victorian Poisons Information Centre	13 11 26

Document control

Version	Date	Change
1.0	March 2024	Original incident reporting procedure created.
2.0	October 2026	Full review and update to Victorian OHS law (including the psychological health regulations from 1 December 2025) and AS ISO 31000:2018 risk rating. Added notifiable incident, insurer and record-keeping requirements; specific responses for each incident type; support and debriefing; online form and QR code; Incident Register in monday.com; new one-page Incident Report Form (DFMP-WHS-F01).