



# Serious Injury

## Fact Sheet

Source: [WorkSafeBC](https://www.worksafebc.com)

### Serious Injury

Any injury that can reasonably be expected at the time of the incident to endanger life or cause permanent injury. Serious injuries include both traumatic injuries that are life threatening or that result in a loss of consciousness, and incidents such as chemical exposures, heat stress and cold stress which are likely to result in a life-threatening condition or cause permanent injury or significant physical impairment.

Injuries that require a critical intervention such as CPR, artificial ventilation or control of hemorrhaging or treatment beyond First Aid, such as the intervention of Emergency Health Services personnel (e.g. transportation to further medical attention), a physician and subsequent surgery or admittance to an intensive care unit are also considered "serious injuries."

### Examples

Traumatic injuries considered "serious injuries" may include:

- Major fractures or crush injuries, such as
  - A fracture of the skull, spine or pelvis
  - Multiple, open or compound fractures or fractures to major bones
  - Crushing injuries to the trunk, head or neck, or multiple crush injuries
- An amputation, at the time of the accident, of an arm or leg or major part of a hand or foot
- Penetrating injuries to eye, head, neck, chest, abdomen or groin
- An accident that caused significant respiratory compromise or punctured lung
- Circulatory shock (i.e. internal hemorrhage) or injury to any internal organ
- Lacerations that cause severe hemorrhages
- All burns that require rapid transport criteria as outlined in the Occupational First Aid Training Manual including:
  - Third degree burns to more than 2% of the body
  - Third degree burns to the face, head or neck
  - Burns of any degree with complications
- An asphyxiation or poisoning resulting in a partial or total loss of physical control (i.e. loss of consciousness of a worker in a confined space) or a respiratory rate of fewer than 10 breaths per minute or severe difficulty / laboured breathing
- Any near drowning incident



## What to Do

Immediate reporting should occur as part of the employers' response at the time of the incident. In responding to the incident, employers should:

- Follow their Emergency Response Plan
- Address any workplace conditions that present an immediate hazard to other workers
- Provide first aid and medical treatment for the injured worker as necessary
- [Report the \\*serious incident to WorkSafeBC](#) \*immediately

Call toll-free 24/7: 1.888.621.7233 (1.888.621.SAFE)

## Why do you Report

The purpose of the reporting requirement in Section 68 is to ensure that a WorkSafeBC prevention officer and/or an investigations office is able to respond to the incident, as soon as possible, in order to:

- Attend at the scene to conduct an investigation of the incident and ensure the integrity of the scene
- Offer availability of counseling services, as appropriate
- Undertake an inspection of the workplace to help ensure that workers are protected before work is resumed
- Help ensure that any post-incident response or cleanup is performed in a safe manner
- Provide a referral to compensation services

## Employer's Responsibility

The [Worker's Compensation Act \(WCA\), Division 10 – Employer Accident Reporting and Investigation, Section 68, \(1\)](#) specifies an employer must immediately notify the Board of the occurrence of any accident that:

- resulted in serious injury to or the death of a worker,
- involved a major structural failure or collapse of a building, bridge, tower, crane, hoist, temporary construction support system or excavation,
- involved the major release of a hazardous substance,
- involved a fire or explosion that had a potential for causing serious injury to a worker, or
- was an incident required by regulation to be reported.

(2) specifies, except as otherwise directed by an officer of the Board or a peace officer, a person must not disturb the scene of an accident that is reportable under subsection (1) except so far as is necessary:

- to attend to persons injured or killed,
- prevent further injuries or death, or
- protect property that is endangered as a result of the accident.

## Shared Obligation

The requirement to immediately report is the responsibility of **an employer**. This implies the shared obligation of all employers involved in the work at the workplace with a knowledge of the injury and can include the sub-contractor, the prime contractor, and the licensee.

Under WCA Section 30 if one person complies with a provision, then all other persons subject to the obligation are relieved of that obligation. A serious injury only needs to be reported once and not by all employers.

Failure to immediately notify WorkSafeBC of a serious injury or fatality will be considered a breach of WCA Section 68 and may result in penalty.