

Pest management – Notifiable Incidents

Guidance Note

The pest management industry uses a wide variety of pesticide and fumigant products which can potentially cause serious harm to health if they are not managed appropriately. If an incident occurs that may adversely affect human health, the Pest Management Act 2001 requires the pest management technician (PMT) to notify Queensland Health of the incident immediately. This guidance note details information about what notifiable incidents are, and what actions the PMT is required to take when a notifiable incident occurs.

What is a Notifiable Incident?

A “notifiable incident” means an exposure, spillage or other release of a pesticide or fumigant that adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect, a person’s health (including yours).

Examples of a notifiable incident include:

- accidental exposure of a person to a pesticide or a fumigant during application
- the accidental injection of pesticide into a reticulation water supply pipe or service pipe
- spray drift resulting in exposure of a person to the pesticide mist

What to do when an incident occurs

In the event of an incident, the following steps should be taken:

- assess and seek medical advice if required,
- contain any spill to reduce further exposure/contamination, and
- notify Queensland Health

Queensland Health will be able to provide advice on what other measures may be required to be taken to manage the incident and who to contact.

It is important to note that even if the incident is being managed by others such as Emergency Services, the Queensland Health **must** still be notified.

Notifying Queensland Health

A PMT must notify Queensland Health of any notifiable incidents that occur while carrying out or supervising a pest management activity.

Notifiable incidents must be:

- reported immediately, either orally or in writing.
- if reported orally – put into writing within seven (7) days from when the incident occurred.

Information required for the notification:

- *your Pest Management Technician licence number*
- *your name and the name of your business, or if you are employed by a business, the name and contact details of your employer*
- *date, time, address and site specifics where the incident occurred*
- *description of the incident including how and what happened, who was involved or affected*
- *name and active constituent, concentration and volume of the pesticide or fumigant*
- *names of any persons exposed, type of exposure, first aid received and medical assessment*
- *the size of the spill, action taken, spill clean-up and disposal of contaminated material*
- *any other relevant information*

Verbal notifications can be made to the:

- Environmental Hazards Unit of the Health Protection Branch on (07) 3328 9310, or
- Environmental Health section of your local Public Health Unit.

If you advise Queensland Health by phone, keep a record of who you spoke to for inclusion in the notice form.

Written notifications can be made via:

- a letter, or
- the form, “Notice to the Chief Executive – Notifiable Incident”, obtainable from:
- the Queensland Health website at:
https://www.health.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0026/444239/notifiable-incident-notice.pdf
 - your local Public Health Unit

Written notifications must be forwarded to:

- your local Public Health Unit, or
- Chief Executive
c/o Environmental Hazards Unit
Queensland Health
PO Box 2368
Fortitude Valley Qld 4006

It is considered best practice that you keep a copy of this guidance note, a copy of the Notifiable Incident Notice form and your local Public Health Unit contact details with you as part of your emergency readiness.

What happens if I don't comply?

Penalties may apply if you don't give notify Queensland Health of a Notifiable Incident.

Where can I get more information?

For full details of the requirements for Notifiable Incidents refer to Section 123 of the Pest Management Act 2001 at https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Acts_SLs/Acts_SL.htm

Enquiries can be directed to the Public Health Unit within your local Hospital and Health Service. Contact details for Public Health Units can be found at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units> or call (07) 33289310.

Useful Contact Information

Queensland Poisons Information Centre on 131126.