

**County of San Diego  
Alcohol and Drug Services  
Contractor Guidelines for Reporting  
Serious Incident and Unusual Occurrence**

When serious incidents or unusual occur at a contractor's facility, it must be reported to the County. All contractors shall establish and follow procedures for reporting serious incidents and unusual occurrences involving client/participants and participants in the contract. Please note that there are different procedures to follow for:

- 1) Serious Incidents, and
- 2) Unusual Occurrences

**Serious Incident Reporting:**

Serious incidents are any that affect the health and safety of contract client/participants, participants, volunteers, or staff. All contractors are required to report serious incidents that they become aware of that involve client/participants, participants, staff, or volunteers who are involved or participating in services or activities, or who have been discharged or inactive from services for 30 days or less. Required reports shall be sent to the Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Quality Improvement (QI) Unit who will review, investigate as necessary, and monitor trends.

The BHS Quality Improvement Unit will communicate with the contract Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) and Alcohol and Drug Services management staff as needed on status of all reported serious incidents. The contractor shall also be responsible for timely reporting of serious incidents to the appropriate authorities as dictated by Federal, State, and/or County regulations, or by any licensing and certification requirements and guidelines that are in effect.

Serious incidents to be reported to BHS Quality Improvement Unit are categorized as follows:

- Death of a client, participant, staff, or volunteer
- Violence or threats of violence including: Homicide or attempted homicide by a client or participant, injurious assault on a client/participant or by a client/participant occurring on the contractor's premises which results in serious physical injury
- Suicide attempt
- Apparent overdose of alcohol or illicit or prescription drugs, whether fatal or injurious, and requiring medical attention, or adverse prescribed

medication reaction or medication error (applies only to residential programs) resulting in physical damage and/or loss of consciousness

- Major confidentiality breach (lost or stolen laptop, large number of client/participant files/records accessed, etc.)

If the situation/occurrence does not meet any of the criteria above, then it would be classified as an Unusual Occurrence.

### **PROCEDURE(S):**

The contractor shall be responsible for reporting a Serious Incident to any other appropriate licensing, governing, or regulatory authorities as necessary and within the reporting time required. Contractors with external licensing authorities will complete forms belonging to that authority and send copies to County BHS-QI Unit. The BHS-QI Unit will track and trend Serious Incident Reports and report to the BHS Director and Alcohol and Drug Services Deputy Director and Assistant Deputy Director.

The following procedures shall be followed for Serious Incidents and Unusual Occurrences:

### **Serious Incident Reporting:**

1. In the event of a Serious Incident, the contractor shall telephonically notify the County BHS Quality Improvement Unit at 619-563-2781 within 24 (twenty-four) hours from the time of the incident. The contractor shall also complete a Quality Improvement Serious Incident Report and fax it to the BHS-QI Unit within 72 hours to **FAX #: (619) 563-2795**. The BHS-QI Unit staff person assigned to monitoring the Serious Incident Line shall log the call on the Quality Improvement Serious Incident Telephone Report.
2. Within 30 days of submitting a QI Serious Incident Report, the contractor shall submit a QI Serious Incident Report of Findings. This report shall be sent via facsimile to the BHS-QI Unit at **FAX #: (619) 563-2795**. The QI Serious Incident Report of Findings will summarize the findings of the event, identify interventions, outcomes, and/or other contract improvements implemented as a result of the incident. BHS QI Unit will review the Serious Incident Report of Findings for reasonableness and confer with the ADS Program Manager/COTR to determine acceptance of the report.

### **Unusual Occurrence Reporting:**

An unusual occurrence is defined as an incident which, while significant, is a less serious incident. Unusual occurrences are to be reported to the ADS Program Manager/COTR or designee in writing within twenty-four (24) hours of their

occurrence. The report may be done by FAX or by e-mail or by hand delivery. The report shall state the issue, the time frame, and what steps the contractor took or will take to manage the unusual occurrence.

Unusual occurrences may include but are not limited to these examples:

- Alleged child abuse
- Police involvement resulting in an arrest
- Self injury or other physical injury less severe than serious incident criteria
- Physical abuse
- AWOL (from adolescent residential facility program only)
- Fire setting
- Poisoning
- Major accident
- Property destruction with a replacement or repair cost greater than \$250.00
- Health and safety issues, to include epidemic outbreak or other infectious disease outbreak

**Notification to Agencies for Safety and Security Purposes:** When Unusual Occurrences occur or are identified, and are appropriate for reporting, the contractor will notify appropriate agencies within their specified timeline and format, and conform with all confidentiality laws and guidelines. Examples include:

1. Children's Services Bureau Hot Line for child abuse reporting and injuries.
2. Law enforcement (police or sheriff) for crime reporting.
3. Fire department: Every fire or explosion which occurs in or on the premises shall be reported within 24 hours to the local fire authority or in areas not having an organized fire service, to the State Fire Marshall.

Quality Review and Improvement Process: The Health and Human Services Agency's Alcohol and Drug Services Administration shall review and/or report all unusual occurrences that may be potential quality of care concerns to appropriate entities.