



Incident reports are key for improving quality and managing risk in healthcare facilities. Documenting the circumstances of an adverse event—one that causes, or has the potential to cause, physical injury or property damage—helps risk managers ensure that the appropriate quality assurance measures are in place.

If an adverse event does occur involving a patient, ensure his safety first. Provide a thorough examination to determine that he is stable. (Blood pressure, pulse, pulse ox, etc., provide first aid/emergency care/911 if required). Notify your supervisor. Then complete an incident report as soon as possible so that you don't forget the details. In general, document the date and time the incident occurred, the names of the injured party and any witnesses, and the names of the doctor and any family members who were notified, as well as when they were informed of the incident.

Describe the incident in a factual and objective manner. Do not point fingers at anyone, including yourself. Whenever possible, use direct quotes from witnesses to convey important details about the event.

Also record the assessment and care you provided immediately following the event, in detail. For example, do not write that you found the patient with a small gash on his left forearm and that you took care of it. Instead, write that you found the patient with a laceration 2 cm long on his arm and that you cleaned it with antibacterial soap and water, applied an antibiotic ointment and covered it with a sterile gauze.

A good rule of thumb is to assume that someone else will read it to try to glean information. So don't leave questions unanswered; instead, write "not applicable" or "information not available." Avoid speculating, too, unless the report asks you to indicate what you think caused the incident. In that case, do so in a concise manner, referring to the facts that led you to reach your conclusion.

When the report is complete, file it with your risk manager. Don't make reference to it or put it in the patient's medical record. This could allow an attorney of a potential plaintiff to obtain the report.



INCIDENT REPORT

DATE	
PATIENT NAME	
THERAPIST NAME	
DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT IN A FACTUAL AND OBJECTIVE MANNER:	
Document the date and time the incident occurred, the names of the injured party and any witnesses, and incident description. Use direct quotes from the involved and witnesses to convey important details about the event.	
RECORD THE ASSESSMENT AND CARE YOU PROVIDED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE EVENT:	
WAS ADDITIONAL CARE NEEDED? (PHYSICIAN, HOSPITAL, ETC.)? INCLUDE CONTACT DETAILS OF PROVIDERS/FACILITIES.	
Names of the providers, caretakers, and any family members who were notified, as well as when they were informed of the incident.	
SIGNATURE	