

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**  
**Behavioral Health Services (BHS) - ADS**  
**Serious Incident and Unusual Occurrence Reporting Guidelines**

**SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING (SIR)**

An incident that may indicate potential risk/exposure for the County – operated or contracted provider (per Statement of Work), client or community shall be reported to the BHS Quality Management (QM) Unit. There are two types of reportable incidents, 1) Serious Incidents are reported to the QM Unit and 2) Unusual Occurrences are reported directly to the program’s Contracting Officer’s Technical Representative (COTR).

All providers are required to report serious incidents involving clients in active treatment or whose discharge from services has been 30 days or less. Required reports shall be sent to the QM Unit who will review, investigate as necessary, and monitor trends. The QM team will communicate with program’s COTR and BHS management. The provider shall also be responsible for reporting serious incidents to the appropriate authorities.

**Serious Incident Categories: Level One and Level Two**

Serious incidents shall be classified into two levels with Level One being most severe and Level Two less severe.

A Level One incident must include at least one of the following:

- The event has the potential for significant adverse media involvement, i.e. appears on local news station, in the newspaper, internet website, reported in the public domain.
- The event is associated with a significant adverse deviation from the usual process for providing behavioral health care.
- The event has results in a death or serious physical injury on the program’s premises.

For Level One, upon knowledge of the incident, the provider shall immediately verbally report the incident to the QM SIR Line at 619-563-2781. The provider shall complete a Serious Incident Report and fax it to the QM Unit within 24 hours of knowledge of incident.

For Level Two, upon knowledge of the incident, the provider shall verbally report the incident to the QM SIR Line at 619-563-2781. The provider shall complete a Serious Incident Report and fax it to the QM Unit within 72 hours of knowledge of incident. A level two incident is any serious incident that does not meet the criteria of a Level One serious incident.

After review of the incident, QM may request a corrective action plan. QM is responsible for working with the provider to specify and monitor the recommended corrective action plan.

The QM Unit will monitor serious incidents and report data to the Quality Review Council (QRC) and Executive Quality Improvement Team (EQIT).

Serious incidents are categorized as follows:

- Incident reported in the media/public domain (e.g. on television, newspaper, internet)
- Death of client by suicide (includes overdose by alcohol/drugs/medications, etc)
- Death of client under questionable circumstances (includes overdose by alcohol/drugs/medications, etc)
- Death of client by homicide
- Suicide attempt by client that requires medical attention or attempt is potentially fatal and/or significantly injurious.
- Alleged homicide committed by a client (client is perpetrator)
- Alleged homicide attempt by a client (client is perpetrator)
- Alleged homicide attempt on a client (client is victim)
- Injurious assault on a client (client is victim) occurring on the program's premises resulting in severe physical damage and/or loss of consciousness, respiratory and/or circulatory difficulties requiring hospitalization.
- Injurious assault by a client (client is perpetrator) occurring on the program's premises resulting in severe physical damage and/or loss of consciousness, respiratory and/or circulatory difficulties requiring hospitalization.
- Tarasoff Notification, the duty to protect intended victim, is made to the appropriate person(s), police, or other reasonable steps have been taken to protect the intended victim.
- Tarasoff Notification, the duty to protect intended victim, is received by the Program that a credible threat of harm has been made against a staff member(s) or Program and appropriate safety measures have been implemented.
- Serious allegations of or confirmed inappropriate staff (includes volunteers, interns) behavior such as sexual relations with a client, client/staff boundary issues, financial exploitation of a client, and/or physical or verbal abuse of a client.

- Serious physical injury resulting in a client experiencing severe physical damage and/or loss of consciousness; respiratory and/or circulatory difficulties requiring hospitalization.
- Adverse medication reaction resulting in severe physical damage and/or loss of consciousness; respiratory and/or circulatory difficulties requiring hospitalization.
- Medication error in prescription or distribution resulting in severe physical damage and/or loss of consciousness; respiratory and/or circulatory difficulties requiring hospitalization.
- Apparent overdose of alcohol/illicit or prescriptions drugs, whether fatal or injurious, requiring medical attention.
- Major confidentiality breach (lost or stolen laptop, client files/records accessed, PHI breach, etc.)
- Use of physical restraints (prone or supine) only during program operating hours (applies only to CYF mental health clients during program operating hours and excludes ADS programs, Hospitals, Long-Term Care Facilities, San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital/EPU, ESU and PERT)
- Other

### **Serious Incident Reporting Procedures**

1. Upon knowledge of incident, program shall verbally report the incident and all known details to the SIR Line at 619-563-2781.
2. All providers are required to report serious incidents involving clients in active treatment or whose discharge from services has been 30 days or less.
3. A Level One serious incident shall be verbally report to the SIR Line immediately upon knowledge of the incident and followed up with the written SIR report to QM no later than 24 hours.
4. A Level Two serious incident shall be verbally reported to the SIR Line no later than 24 hours of knowledge of the incident and followed up with the written SIR report to QM within 72 hours.
5. All serious incidents shall be investigated and reviewed by the program and the Report of Findings form shall be completed and faxed to QM within 30 days of knowledge of incident.
6. A serious incident that results in a completed suicide will automatically trigger a chart review by the QM Unit and will require the program to complete a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) within 30 days of knowledge of the incident.
7. A serious incident that results in a completed suicide or a major confidentiality breach shall require the completion of an RCA within 30 days of knowledge of the incident.

8. The Action Items as a result of the RCA shall be summarized and faxed to the QM unit with 30 days of knowledge of the incident. Do not submit the RCA worksheet, only a summary of action items.

Please Note:

San Diego County Contracted programs may use the Serious Incident RCA Worksheet or some other process that is approved by their Legal Entity. It is strongly recommended that programs not choosing to use the Serious Incident RCA Worksheet ensure that the process they do use incorporates best practices for their analysis of findings (see <http://www.jointcommission.org/sentinevents/forms/> for more info on RCA). Technical assistance is available through the QM Unit by calling 619-563-2747. RCA training is offered on a regular basis.

**UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE REPORTING:**

An unusual occurrence is defined as an incident that may indicate potential risk/exposure for the County – operated or contracted provider (per Statement of Work), client or community that does not meet the criteria of a serious incident. Unusual occurrences are to be reported to your 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 to all confidentiality laws and guidelines. Examples include:

1. Child Welfare and Elder Abuse Reporting hotlines.
2. Tarasoff reporting to intended victim and law enforcement

3. Law enforcement (police, sheriff, school police, agency security, military security/Naval Investigative Service, etc.) for crime reporting or requiring security assistance and inquiries.
4. 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.

BHS shall review and/or report all unusual occurrences that may be potential quality of care concerns to appropriate entities.