

Accident/Incident Form Wording Guidance

All incidents involving actual/alleged injury must be recorded using the [HOC Accident and Incident Reporting Form](#), preferably as soon as the incident occurs or within the same working day, where reasonably practicable, but must be within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

The Accident/Incident Reporting Form should be completed by the person initially reporting the incident (normally the instructor or initially attending staff member) but can be completed by anyone who has been conveyed the knowledge of the incident.

PLEASE ALWAYS READ **BEFORE** MAKING AN ENTRY INTO THE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT FORM

Statements recorded in the Accident/Incident Form can be used as evidence in related compensation claims for personal injury etc. It is therefore very important that events are recorded carefully, and appropriate wording is chosen, so that hearsay or unsubstantiated claims of events or injury are not recorded as fact.

For example, if you actually see a person fall over, that may be fact – but the reason **why** they fell, or the injury they claim was sustained as a result, was not.

A clearly visible injury (for example a cut or bruise) may be fact, but the cause **is not** if you only have the description of events provided by the injured person or someone who claims to have witnessed it.

In reality, the person may actually have fallen down because they fainted, due to a pre-existing medical condition, or had deliberately fallen down stairs and pretended to hurt themselves as part of a bogus insurance claim. Unless you saw the accident take place and the resulting injury, it may be that the injury shown to you was not even caused by the incident in question.

Therefore, if you were to report this as: “the person fell down the stairs, having tripped on a loose piece of carpet and twisted their back”, your words would later be produced as evidence that you agreed with that interpretation of events or injury at the time.

It is therefore essential that events are recorded with great care.

Always, therefore, use words and phrases such as:

- “The person claimed....”
- “The person alleged....”
- “He said that....”
- “She believed that....”
- “He thought that....”
- “In the witness’s opinion....”

REMEMBER: A POOR CHOICE OF WORDS COULD RESULT IN AN UNJUSTIFIED CLAIM COSTING THOUSANDS OF POUNDS

Delayed accident reporting

If an accident is reported some time after the event, the Accident/Incident Reporting Form should be completed and a prompt investigation carried out as necessary. However, it is vital that a note is added to the documents which says ‘**LATE INCIDENT REPORT**’ in red ink and to note the actual date the incident was reported as well as the date of the alleged incident.

