

Safety Facts:

First Aid – Serious/Traumatic Injuries*

According to the *Workers Compensation Act (WCA)* section 68 (1) the employer must immediately notify WorkSafeBC if an accident resulted in a serious injury. Under *Occupational Health and Safety Guideline (OHSG)* P2-68-1, WorkSafeBC defines a serious injury as:

A serious injury is any injury that can reasonably be expected at the time of the incident to endanger life or cause permanent injury. Serious injuries include both traumatic injuries that are life threatening or that result in a loss of consciousness, and incidents such as chemical exposures, heat stress, and cold stress which are likely to result in a life-threatening condition or cause permanent injury or significant physical impairment.

The guideline then gives examples of medical conditions considered as traumatic injury e.g., a fracture of the skull, spine, or pelvis.

Why is it important?

It is important to recognize what a serious injury is, so that you can comply with WCA 68(2) requirements. You must not disturb the accident scene except if necessary to:

- Attend to the person injured or killed,
- Prevent further injuries or death, or
- Protect property that is endangered as a result of the accident.

Key characteristics

You are allowed and expected to attend to the person injured. Follow the emergency response procedures outlined in your company's emergency response plan (ERP) (e.g., how to summon first aid or call for an ambulance).

You should take steps to prevent further injuries. In this example, the worker spilled a liquid on the floor and then slipped and fractured their leg. If you are coming to help the injured worker, you don't want to rush in and then also slip on the liquid. It would be reasonable to put down absorbent pads or kitty litter to soak up the liquid. Then you can attend to the injured worker.

You need to protect property endangered by the accident. In our example, the liquid spilled is flammable. It would be reasonable to shut off equipment/furnaces, and open doors to ventilate the area, to prevent an explosion or fire.

Preventive next steps

- Participate in emergency response training offered by your company. This should include reviewing what is a serious injury. Refresher training could be provided via toolbox talks

- When an accident occurs, follow the procedures outlined in your company Emergency Response Plan (ERP)
- As a responder to an accident, make sure to identify hazards before helping the victims
- Should the accident include a serious injury, remind the appropriate personnel to secure the accident scene as per WCA 68 (2) and your company's ERP
- In a serious injury, do not clean up the accident scene until authorized by WorkSafeBC
- After a serious injury, it may be helpful to have counseling available for staff. See your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for services available



For additional resources visit:

[Immediate notice of certain accidents](#) | WorkSafeBC

[WorkSafeBC notification of serious injuries](#) | WorkSafeBC

[Advice or referrals for employee counseling and support](#) | Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC

