

Housing & Residence Life Incident Report Writing

Presented By:

Office of Community Standards

RicEsha Clark, Student Conduct Specialist: Case Manager

Objectives:

- ✓ Understand the purpose of writing accurate, unbiased incident reports
- ✓ The formatting and mechanics of incident reports
- ✓ Hear about some common mistakes
- ✓ See sample incident reports and practice

Purpose and Importance of Incident Reporting:

Purpose:

- To provide an unbiased account of events to professional staff members who may not have been on scene during the incident.

Importance:

- The incident report serves as an official report of the incident and will be discussed or investigated at a later date.
- This official report will allow professional staff such as our Dean of Students, Office of Community Standards staff, Counselors, Title IX Coordinator, UPD, and/or others, an opportunity to follow up with the students involved.
- By documenting these incidents, UWG is able to see and analyze different trends in the behaviors of our students.

How to write an incident report...

Step One:

Know the facts and individuals involved!

- ✓ Use your senses and make notes on what you see, smell, and hear.
- ✓ Be sure to record the names and titles of all involved parties (i.e. Resident Julie Jones, Resident Assistant Rick Ryan, UPD Officer Dan Daniels).
- ✓ In addition to titles, record student ID numbers, building and room number, and note the type of incident/violation(s).
- ✓ Include important quotes and inappropriate language, even if it is hurtful.
- ✓ If appropriate take pictures of the violation.

How to write an incident report...

Step Two:

Write in third person!

- ✓ Assume that the reader does not know you and they do not know any of the involved parties. Writing in third person will provide clarity for the reader.
- ✓ The first time you refer to a staff member, whether it is yourself or anyone else, use the person's entire job title, ex: Desk Attendant (DA) Beth Brown, Resident Assistant (RA) Casey Clay, or Residence Life Coordinator (RLC) Jon Jordan.
- ✓ The first time you reference a resident put their entire name, ex: Resident Michael Mills, Resident Carl Cook. After the first time you reference a resident put Resident (with capital "R") and last name, ex: Resident Mills, Resident Cook.
- ✓ Do not use pronouns for people (she, he, them, ect.), it can make the report very confusing, use the actual name, even if it seems repetitive.
- ✓ When referring to parents please put "Resident Carl Cook's mother, Mrs. Cook" some parents and residents have different last names. After the first time it is okay to just put "Mrs. Cook."
- ✓ It is ok to lump residents together with one "Residents" ex: instead of "Resident Mills, Resident Smith, and Resident Cook were in the hallway" you can say "Residents Mills, Smith, and Cook were in the hallway".

How to write an incident report...

Step Three:

Be detailed and objective!

- ✓ Your narrative should also reflect statements made by the involved parties.
- ✓ It may feel counterintuitive, but it is a good practice to start most sentences with the person's title and name, followed by an action such as said, stated, or explained.
- ✓ You should also focus on providing the who, what, when, where, why, and how without interjecting your personal feelings about the incident.

How to write an incident report...

Step Four:

Write immediately and chronologically!

- ✓ Write the incident report promptly. Try to submit it within an hour of the incident!
- ✓ Create a detailed timeline of events to help provide more logical and easy-to-understand narrative of the events.

How to write an incident report...

Step Five:

Proofread before you submit!

- ✓ Make sure the report is written professionally with accurate spelling and grammar. If it helps, write it in a Word document first, then copy and paste into the IR.
- ✓ Complete every section of the incident report form.
- ✓ Include time, date, location, individuals involved, and reason for you being there in the body of text, not just in the required fields.

Common Mistakes

- ✓ Involved Parties Section
 - Do not included yourself in the involve parties section
 - Role of the Parties:
 - Alleged – student who may be charged with a violation of the student code of conduct
 - Victim – the person affected by the alleged misconduct
 - Witness – individual who saw, overheard, or has additional information regarding the incident
 - Student Concern – student who may have taken an action that gives cause for concern, but may or may not have violated the student code of conduct
- ✓ Not giving accurate information or omitting information
- ✓ Uploading a picture that doesn't match the narrative
- ✓ Including personal opinions as facts

A Good Incident Report...

- ✓ Includes chronological dates, times, and locations for when/where the incident occurred
- ✓ Is written in the third person
- ✓ Identifies those involved, including witnesses, and additional staff
- ✓ Names and ID numbers should be taken from their ID
- ✓ Use first and last name initially, and then their last name
- ✓ If two people have the same last name then include initials from their first name
- ✓ Use appropriate titles and subsequent abbreviations (ex. Resident Assistant, RA)
- ✓ Is clear, concise, grammatically error free, and is professionally written
- ✓ Includes strictly objective facts, not opinions, guesses, or assumptions
- ✓ You should include whether those involved were cooperative or not, but be sure to back up this opinion with facts that show they were/weren't
- ✓ Provides all requested and required information
- ✓ Quote word for word what people say that is relevant to the incident

NOW..... Time to practice!

Sample Bad Incident Report

I was chilling in Gunn and heard something. I knocked on the door and John answered. I told him he couldn't drink in his room because aint 21. John shoulda known that, cuz he'd been to my floor meeting. I told John and the other guy in the room to dump out the beer. They're both cool dudes and shouldn't be punished for having beer on the floor. I mean, it was the end of the semester and just a few beers and he dumped it out. Oh, I told em to have a great night when they closed the door.

****Rewrite this report****

Sample Good Incident Report

At approximately 12:35am on Thursday, December 16, 2020 Resident Assistant (RA) Peter Parker was doing rounds on second floor of Gunn Hall when he heard loud music and yelling coming from room 231. As RA Parker approached room 231, he also heard the sound of cans being opened and chants of "chug, chug, chug." When RA Parker arrived at the door to room 231, a male voice from inside the room said "I'm so glad that the semester is over. I'm going to party all night." RA Parker knocked on the door and announced himself as the RA on duty. Immediately after RA Parker knocked on the door, RA Parker heard the loud music being turned down and rustling of cans inside the room. As RA Parker was getting ready to knock again, Resident John James opened the door. RA Parker greeted Resident James and explained that he had heard loud music and conversations about drinking coming from inside the room. RA Parker asked Resident James if there was any alcohol in the room. Resident James explained that he and his roommate, Resident Sam Smith, had a few beers because they were celebrating being done with finals. RA Parker asked to see Residents James and Smith's id. While writing down their information RA Parker asked if the residents of the room were 21 or over, and both Residents James and Smith indicated that they were not.

Sample Good Incident Report (Cont'd)

RA Parker reminded Residents James and Smith of the university's alcohol policy, and stated that he needed the residents to collect all the alcohol that was in the room to be disposed of in the bathroom. RA Parker watched as Resident Smith opened the refrigerator and produced eight cans of Bud Light (two cans were open and partially consumed and six were unopened), along with a half-full bottle of Captain Morgan rum. RA Parker did a visual scan of the room and saw no indication of additional alcohol or any other policy violations. RA Parker then escorted Residents James and Smith to the bathroom and asked them to pour out the remaining alcohol in the sink and recycle the cans and bottle. Residents James and Smith complied and asked RA Parker what would happen now. RA Parker explained that he would be documenting the situation and that the office of community standards will review the report and contact you. Both Residents James and Smith were compliant throughout the entire incident.

If you have any questions?

If you ever need any help or have any questions, email me at rclark@westga.edu or call at 678-839-5585.