RIDDOR Explained: Which Workplace Incidents You Must Report

Legislation · Published 21 September 2026 by Integral Safety Ltd · integralsafetyltd.co.uk/blog/riddor-explained-which-workplace-incidents-you-must-report



What RIDDOR Is and Who It Applies To

RIDDOR stands for the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. It places a legal duty on employers, the self-employed and anyone in control of work premises to report certain serious incidents to the enforcing authority. The duty sits with the employer or the person in control of the premises, not with the injured worker, which surprises some managers who assume the individual has to make the report themselves.

The purpose is simple. Reported incidents give regulators a picture of where risks are not being controlled, so patterns across a sector or a particular type of work can be spotted and acted on. For the business making the report, RIDDOR data is also a useful prompt to look again at the underlying risk assessment, whether that covers manual handling in a warehouse, work at height on a construction site, or scalding risks in a care home kitchen.

Two things cause most of the confusion in practice. First, not every accident is reportable; many are simply recordable in an accident book and never need to go near the regulator. Second, the deadlines and the exact wording of each category matter, so a loose understanding of "RIDDOR covers serious injuries" is not enough to get it right.

Deaths and Specified Injuries

Work-related deaths must always be reported, whether the person who died was a worker or a member of the public. The same applies to the list of "specified injuries" suffered by workers, which includes:

- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
- Amputations
- Injuries likely to cause permanent loss or reduction of sight
- Crush injuries to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- Serious burns covering more than 10% of the body, or damaging the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- Scalpings requiring hospital treatment
- Loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- Injuries arising from working in an enclosed space that lead to hypothermia or heat-induced illness, or that require resuscitation or admission to hospital for more than 24 hours

These must be reported without delay, by the quickest practicable means, and a full report must follow within ten days of the incident. For a fatality or a specified injury, do not wait until the end of the shift to decide whether it counts; make the report and gather the details afterwards.

Over-Seven-Day and Recordable Injuries

If a worker is incapacitated for more than seven consecutive days because of a work-related accident, the incident must be reported within 15 days. The count excludes the day of the accident itself but includes weekends and rest days, so a worker injured on a Thursday who is still unable to do their normal work on the Friday of the following week has passed the seven-day mark, even if they were rostered for only a few of those days. "Incapacitated" means unable to do the full range of their normal duties, so time on light duties counts towards the seven days as well as time off.

There is a lower threshold that often gets confused with this one. Any injury that keeps a worker off or on restricted duties for more than three consecutive days must be recorded, for example in an accident book, but it only becomes reportable to the regulator once it passes seven days. Getting this distinction wrong in either direction causes problems: under-reporting genuine seven-day cases is a compliance failure, while reporting every three-day absence wastes time and can mask the incidents that need investigating.

Occupational Diseases

Certain diagnosed diseases must be reported when a doctor confirms them in writing and the worker's job involves the relevant work activity. The list includes carpal tunnel syndrome, occupational dermatitis, hand-arm vibration syndrome, occupational asthma, tendonitis of the hand or forearm and occupational cancers, and each has its own work-activity test. The trigger is a written diagnosis, not just a worker's own suspicion that their job caused the condition.

This category catches out employers in sectors with repetitive manual tasks or exposure to dust, chemicals or vibration, including manufacturing and engineering environments and care settings where manual handling is a daily feature of the job. If you are not already monitoring ill health trends alongside accident trends, a diagnosed case is often the first sign that a control measure such as task rotation or equipment choice needs reviewing. Where vibration or noise exposure is a genuine risk, you will need an occupational health provider to assess and monitor it; that sits outside what a general safety review can tell you.

Dangerous Occurrences, Gas Incidents and Members of the Public

Dangerous occurrences are near misses with serious potential, drawn from a specific list in the regulations. Examples include the collapse or failure of lifting equipment, certain scaffold collapses, the accidental release of a substance that could cause serious harm, and certain electrical incidents causing fire or explosion. No one needs to have been hurt for these to be reportable; the event itself is enough, and construction and warehousing operations in particular should have a clear process for recognising them when lifting gear, racking or scaffolding is involved.

Certain gas incidents are also reportable, and registered gas engineers must report dangerous gas fittings they find while carrying out other work. An incident involving a member of the public, rather than a worker, is reportable if it arises from a work activity and the person is taken directly from the scene to hospital for treatment. The detail matters here: taken for treatment, not merely taken for examination or as a precaution. A visitor who trips and is sent for checks only, with no treatment, does not meet the threshold, even if the fall looked serious at the time.

How to Report, What to Keep, and What Goes Wrong

Reports are made online through the regulator's website, with a telephone option reserved for fatal and specified injuries so they can be actioned immediately. Keep records of every reportable incident for at least three years, and keep your internal accident book entries regardless of whether an incident ever becomes reportable, because that internal record is what feeds your risk assessments and reveals trends long before anything crosses a RIDDOR threshold.

In practice, the most common failures are not dramatic. They are small gaps that add up:

- Treating "off work for a few days" as automatically non-reportable without actually counting the days against the seven-day rule
- No clear process for who decides reportability, so incidents sit unreported while managers wait for someone else to act
- Dangerous occurrences being treated as "nothing happened, so nothing to report"
- Occupational disease diagnoses never reaching whoever manages RIDDOR, because the information arrives via occupational health rather than the accident book
- No review of RIDDOR data against the risk assessment, so the same category of incident recurs

Responsibility for getting this right usually sits with whoever manages health and safety day to day,

but it should be written into your arrangements document under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 so there is no ambiguity about who decides and who reports. That arrangement should be reviewed regularly, and sooner after any significant incident, as part of your wider health and safety review.

Investigating After You Report

A RIDDOR report tells the regulator what happened. It does not tell you why it happened or how to stop it happening again; that takes a proper investigation that looks at root causes, not just the immediate trigger. Integral Safety provides a professional accident investigation service and runs an accident investigation training course for teams who want to build that skill in-house, which is particularly relevant for organisations in construction and warehousing and logistics, where lifting equipment and work at height are common.

If you are ever unsure whether an incident is reportable, or your current arrangements have not been reviewed for a while, get in touch with Integral Safety's Coalville-based team and we will help you work it out.

Talk to Integral Safety Ltd

We are health and safety consultants based in Coalville, Leicestershire, working with businesses across the East Midlands. If anything in this guide applies to your workplace, we can help.

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This guide is general information about UK health and safety law and practice, correct as at 11 November 2026. It is not advice on your particular circumstances. The latest version is at https://integralsafetyltd.co.uk/blog/riddor-explained-which-workplace-incidents-you-must-report.