

### Introduction

Good observations are critical to the lessons management process. This guide provides you with information and prompts to support the development of an observation. You do not need to wait until the conclusion of an incident or event to submit an observation. Fire and Emergency is committed to learning across all phases of an incident:

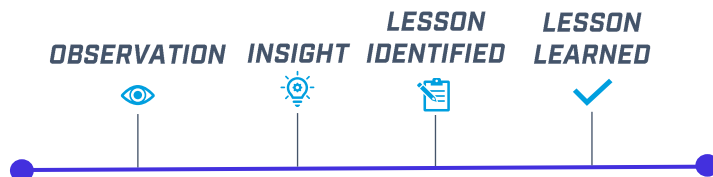
**Learn Before | Learn During | Learn After**

### What is an observation?

These are the building blocks of the lessons management process. They are facts or occurrences that our personnel regard as worth noting, as an example of good practice or an opportunity for improvement. Observations can be recorded in multiple ways by our personnel, i.e., they can be raised verbally during an After-Action Review meeting, in-writing during a live event via a QR code form or noted in an email and sent to an Incident Controller after the event has wound down. It is important to note that Observations are not lessons on their own.

### Where does it go?

Observations are collated, validated and analysed. Any patterns or themes arising can be distilled into **insights**, which is the next step of the O.I.L.L. process used to create and implement a lesson.



## Elements of a good observation

### Key points

- One idea per observation
- Written in plain English
- Succinct
- Anonymous (use incident positions, not names)
- Acronyms spelt out
- Avoids jargon and colloquialisms
- Descriptive and includes examples

### 1. Who?

- Who did the observation come from - what is their position, role, or agency? Do not use names – this is not about identifying or ‘naming and shaming’ an individual.

### 2. When?

- What was the date? Did the activity / response have a name? This gives context around the event, how long ago it occurred, and allows comparison with other observations raised for the same event.

### 3. Where?

- Where did the activity occur? What it in specific terrain, a coordination centre? During a project or exercise? This allows comparison with other experiences in the same sort of location or environment.

### 4. What?

- This is the detail of what occurred, what was seen, heard, or felt, and the resulting impacts.

## Further reading

### Fire and Emergency Policies and Procedures

- Lessons Management Policy
- Lessons Management Procedure
- Lessons Management Framework (Reference Guide)

### Guides and educational resources

- Guideline for real-time observation capture
- Fact sheet: O.I.L.L. Methodology
- [Australian Institute for Disaster Research – Lessons Management Handbook \(2019\) \[external link\]](#)

# Lessons Management Guide

## Exemplar observations



### Firefighter observation

Here is an example of what an officer or firefighter might submit as an observation from an incident they have attended.

- I was the OIC (Officer In Charge) of (insert callsign) on (insert date) and we were responded to a rescue after a motor vehicle crash (MVC) on SH1 during a heavy traffic period.
- I was the second arriving appliance and observed that the first arriving appliance had not parked to protect the accident scene or placed road cones to cut off the affected lanes. This allowed traffic to drive through the accident scene putting first responders and patients at risk of serious injury.
- This is an issue that has occurred before at incidents prior to the arrival of Police or Traffic Management contractors.
- I recommend that crews that have a pump support role at MVC incidents undertake regular training and revision of the Pump Support training module and the ERD (Emergency Response Driver) module on parking at incidents.

### Incident Management Team member observation

Here is an example of what an IMT member might submit as an observation during or after a deployment.

- I was in the Welfare function in the NCC (National Coordination Centre) during the stand-up for Cyclone Gabrielle and the North Island Severe Weather Events from 27<sup>th</sup> January – 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023.
- There was no generic Welfare Plan available to support our people at the start of this deployment. This meant we had to spend time researching and writing a suitable plan that could cater for people at all levels of the organisation and ensure welfare tasks were delegated to responsible managers and commanders. There were some initial gaps, and we disappointed some of our people and their families.
- Utilising this plan as a basis, a generic Welfare Plan should be created. This is so that at the start of any deployment or Coordination Centre stand-up the Welfare function can hit the ground running. This will ensure the welfare needs of our people are met from the outset and responsibilities and tasks are understood by those responsible.