

# INCIDENT REPORT TIPS

- Remember that you are documenting a situation, not an individual.
- Be very professional – these reports may be used in court as evidence.
- Provide as many accurate and relevant details as you can (i.e. times of events within an incident, names of all persons involved, phone calls made, specific comments made, description of the scene of incident). The better this is done, the more effective the follow up with the individuals will be.
- Include only pertinent information.
- Recount all events in chronological order
- Be very clear about who did what.
- Avoid any value judgments, assumptions and personal reactions – stick to cold facts.
- Do not provide commentary or subjective opinions/conclusions. Just articulate the who, what, when, and where. If there is any subjective information you feel it is important to share, contact the Assistant Director in person.
- Complete every section of the report form on Advocate immediately after the incident.
- Make sure the report is written professionally with accurate spelling and grammar. Write the body of the report in Word first, and then copy and paste into Advocate.
- Use third person voice. In order to be clear who you are talking about, try to use names as much as possible and avoid too many “he”, “her”, “they”, etc. references.
- Upon first reference, use person’s title, first name and last name (i.e Graduate Head Resident, John Smith; Resident Assistant, Jane Doe; Resident, Bob Thomas, etc.).
- For subsequent references, use person’s last name (i.e Smith; Doe; Thomas; etc.).
- Provide clear details about your observations and knowledge of the incident. It is sometimes helpful to include whether someone was compliant/respectful or non-compliant/disrespectful. If you do, provide evidence of that interaction (i.e. Thomas did not comply with Doe’s request to provide identification. Thomas yelled, “Screw you, RA!” three times in a row.).
- When done, reread the report. Ask yourself if you could clearly understand what happened by solely reading the report.
- When you are writing a report, you are not making a decision about whether or not the resident will face charges, let alone be sanctioned. You are simply reporting information. It is up to the Assistant Director for Residential Life to determine how to proceed with the information.