



Security Sensitive Biological Agents Regulatory Scheme

SSBA – Guideline 5 – Reporting to law enforcement or the National Security Hotline

January 2026

Introduction

This guideline provides an overview of the process that should be followed if an entity or facility has an incident that must be reported to law enforcement or should be reported to the National Security Hotline.

Law enforcement (police)

Mandatory reporting to law enforcement, in addition to reporting to the Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC), is a requirement of the *National Health Security Act 2007* (NHS Act) for certain events.

The following must be reported to law enforcement **as soon as possible and within 24 hours** after discovery of the event or after you become aware of the event:

- Theft¹ of a security sensitive biological agent (SSBA)
- attempted theft¹ of an SSBA;
- unauthorised access to a place in which an SSBA is handled or sensitive information (as defined by the NHS legislation) is stored, including its storage container;
- attempted unauthorised access to a place in which an SSBA is handled or sensitive information (as defined by the NHS legislation) is stored, including its storage container;
- loss¹ of an SSBA; and
- unsuccessful transfer (incomplete arrival or evidence of tampering) of an SSBA.

1. For further information, see Guideline 4 – Defining Loss, Theft and Accidental Release of SSBA.

Who should you contact?

In order of priority, contact:

- In an emergency (imminent threat, life or death situation), dial triple zero (000).
- If it is not an emergency, using the list below, contact the police in your jurisdiction.

Jurisdictional law enforcement agencies

Jurisdiction	Contact details
ACT Policing	131 444
Western Australia Police	0427 389 123 – Office of State Security and Emergency Coordination
South Australia Police	In the first instance please contact the State Protective Security Branch on (08) 8204 2839 if unanswered please contact the Police Communications Senior Sergeant on (08) 8207 4488 and request the on-call State Protective Security Branch staff member be notified of the incident.
Tasmania Police	During business hours please contact the Counter Terrorism Unit (03) 6230 2500 . After Hours please call 131 444 and ask to speak to the supervisor of Radio Dispatch Services and request notification of the report to be made to the Director Counter Terrorism Unit.
Northern Territory Police	131 444
Queensland Police Service	In the first instance please contact (07) 3364 6315 if unanswered please contact 0417 706 899 .
New South Wales Police Force	0448 440 802 – Counter-Terrorism and Special Tactics Command
Victoria Police	131 444

What if you are unsure of whether something is a reportable event?

If in doubt, please contact the Australian CDC on the contact information listed above. An alternative source of advice is the Australian Federal Police Weapons Technical Intelligence (WTI) team. WTI can be contacted on 02 5126 9175 during business hours, weapons-technical-intelligence@afp.gov.au. A 24-hour urgent response is available through AFP National Switchboard 5126 0000 (ask for WTI). WTI can provide technical advice to law enforcement and entities on the potential for malicious use of harmful biological agents.

Information you may be asked to provide

This list is not exhaustive and details may change depending on the incident.

- Who is making the report (details of the caller, entity, facility and contact details)?
- Contact person details (name, entity, facility and contact details).
- What has happened (theft, attempted theft, unauthorised access, etc.)?
- Who have you already reported this incident to?
- When did the event happen (when was it first discovered)?
- Where did it happen (location of facility)?
- How did it happen (broken lock, property damage etc.)?
- What is the immediate risk/danger posed by the event?
- Offender details (description, vehicle, clothing).
- Is any SSBA(s) missing? If so:
 - how much of the SSBA(s) is missing?
 - how was it packaged?
 - what does the packaging look like?
 - how does it need to be maintained for example, cold/hot?
- Who has the SSBA now?
- What is the threat to the community?
 - how dangerous or toxic is the SSBA?
 - what are the effects of exposure to or infection by the SSBA?
- Are there any safety issues (assembly points, personal protective equipment)

When providing information to police you should be mindful of the information that you are providing and notify them if the information is sensitive in nature.

You should ask for a job number from the police when reporting the incident. You will need to provide this number to the National Security Hotline (if applicable) and the Australian CDC e when reporting the incident.

Suspicious behaviour

Suspicious behaviour and activities such as theft of equipment and related information should be reported to the National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400 and to law enforcement; however, is not a mandatory reportable event under the NHS Act.

For further information on suspicious behaviour please refer to the guideline prepared by the Australian Federal Police – *Indicators of Suspicious Behaviour in Laboratories Handling SSBA*. You can request a copy of this guideline by emailing your details to ssba@cdc.gov.au.