

What Happens If an Incident Report is Filed?

All Incidents are handled by Advisory Councils (Pet Partner and Team Evaluator). These Councils are comprised of up to 11 members each from across the country and represent a wide range of diverse backgrounds and experience. Each Advisory Council is charged with receiving, reviewing and responding to incidents involving their members, as well as providing ongoing assistance to members with process and procedure issues.

1. When an Incident Report is filed, that incident report is transmitted to the appropriate Advisory Council. All incidents are treated as confidential information by all members of the Advisory Councils, and each member has signed a Confidentiality Agreement that includes not participating in any incident where they may not be, or may not be perceived to be, impartial.

Example 1: An incident is filed by a Pet Partner giving information that another Pet Partner may be using an unapproved piece of equipment during a visit – a choke collar. This incident is transmitted to the Pet Partners Advisory Council.

Example 2: An incident is filed by a Pet Partner giving information that during their renewal evaluation, an exercise was not conducted according to PPAT standards. This incident is transmitted to the Team Evaluators Advisory Council.

2. The person or team that the incident is filed about will be notified to suspend their volunteer activities until the investigation is resolved. If the complaint is filed against:
 - Pet Partner team:
 - This team is suspended from visiting until the incident is resolved.
 - If the Pet Partner has more than one registered pet, they CAN continue visiting with the other pet unless otherwise notified.
 - If the Pet Partner is also an Evaluator or Instructor, those activities CAN continue unless otherwise notified.
 - Pet Partner Handler only:
 - All Pet Partner teams including this handler are suspended from visiting.
 - If the Pet Partner is also an Evaluator or Instructor, those activities CAN continue unless otherwise notified.
 - Pet Partner Team Evaluator:
 - The Evaluator certification is suspended from scoring any portion of Team Evaluations, but may participate as an assistant unless otherwise notified.
 - If Evaluator is also part of a Pet Partner team, they may continue to visit unless otherwise notified.
 - If Evaluator is also a Team Instructor, they may continue to conduct classes unless otherwise notified.
 - Pet Partner Team Instructor:
 - The Instructor certification is suspended from conducting the Team Training Course.
 - If Instructor is also part of a Pet Partner team, they may continue to visit unless otherwise notified.
 - If Instructor is also a Team Evaluator, they may continue to conduct evaluations unless otherwise notified.

Please note that continued participation decisions are based on the nature and type of incident filed. While an incident involving a scratch on a client would suspend the team from visiting until resolution is completed, it probably would not impact Evaluator or Instructor activities unless the issue is such that it might demonstrate a safety risk, continued lack of professionalism, or continued disregard for policies and procedures. Each incident is treated as a unique situation.

3. The incident is assigned to a council member who will be the primary investigator and will gather information from all parties, including the person the incident is filed on, any witnesses who were present, or any other parties that would have information that would be pertinent. All parties are advised that they should treat the incident as confidential, and not discuss the incident or information with anyone who is not appropriate. Bottom line – treat the incident as if it were filed against you and don't gossip!

If an incident is filed against you or your team, you will be contacted by the investigator to answer any questions. The investigator will request that you submit your information to the investigator in writing – you may include as much information as you wish.

The investigator will follow an “incident investigation checklist” to make sure that each incident is handled consistently and fairly, and will inquire with Delta staff if there have been previous incident reports on you or a team you participated in. That information may or may not be relevant to the incident at hand.

Advisory Council members who cannot be impartial on an incident, pet or person, or may have the perception of not being impartial, will not participate in the investigation.

4. When all relevant information has been gathered by the investigator from all sources, the material is transmitted to the members of the Advisory Council, as well as a recommended resolution drafted by the investigator.

Advisory Council members who cannot be impartial on an incident, pet or person, or may have the perception of not being impartial, will not vote on or assist in revising an incident resolution.

5. At the next regularly scheduled Advisory Council conference call, the incident is presented by the investigator, along with the recommended resolution. The incident is discussed fully by all council members, additional questions may be asked of the investigator and if necessary, the investigation will continue to flesh out additional questions brought by Council members.

The investigator's recommended resolution will take into account:

- the type and the severity of incident;
- impact of the incident for involved parties and the community;
- whether there is a violation of policy or procedures;
- if there have been other incidents or issues with the subject team, evaluator, instructor etc.;
- the experience of the team involved;
- handler error involvement or neglect; and
- any other pertinent information that bears on the incident.

6. The final resolution is transmitted to : via email if available as well as by mail in hard copy to:
- The affected Pet Partner(s), Evaluator(s), and/or Instructor(s);
 - The Affiliate that the Pet Partner(s), Evaluator(s), and/or Instructor(s) participate with, including an unregistered therapy group (non-Affiliate);
 - Any other party(ies) that resolution information should appropriately be notified ; and a copy of the incident and resolution will be placed in the individual's employment or volunteer files.

Because resolutions are determined by an Advisory Council in conjunction with Delta staff, the resolution of an incident is final and binding. Should any additional information that would be pertinent to the resolution of an incident come to light after the resolution is determined and communicated to the Pet Partner, Evaluator or Instructor, Delta Society staff and the reviewing Advisory Council will take the new information under advisement to determine if the incident/resolution will be re-opened.