

TIPS FOR WRITING AN INCIDENT REPORT

DO THIS Write objectively	✓ Record who and what applies
	✓ Record details in objective terms
	✓ Describe what was seen and heard
	✓ Describe only actions that were performed at the time of the event (e.g., assessment of injuries, assistance back to bed, physician present)
DO THIS Include essential information	✓ Record where, when, and who applies
	✓ Record what the patient said about the incident
	✓ Record the time and place of incident
	✓ Record physician contact
DO THIS File report promptly and properly	✓ Send to the designated department per organization policy
DON'T DO THIS Offer or seek opinions	✓ Do not give your opinion on how it could have been avoided
	✓ Don't speak to the nurse manager, supervisor, or risk manager
	✓ Avoid statements like, "Staffed below standard for unit"
DON'T DO THIS Play the blame game	✓ Do not use incident reports to blame others

About the author: *Patricia A. Duclos-Miller, MS, RN, CNA, BC, is a full-time associate professor in nursing at Capital Community College in Hartford, CT. During her 30-plus years in nursing, Duclos-Miller has served in a variety of roles, including staff nurse in the specialties of medical/surgical nursing, obstetrical nursing, and neonatal intensive care. She is a recognized speaker on contemporary nursing topics such as quality, team building, and documentation issues. She is the author of [Managing Documentation Risk: A Guide for Nurse Managers, Second Edition.](#)*