



The Lessons Management Framework was developed for the NSW Emergency Management Sector to support identification, sharing and learning of lessons across the sector.

For further information visit
nsw.gov.au/resilience-nsw

You can access the Foundations in Lessons Management online training course at **emtraining.nsw.gov.au**

Writing Good Observations

The building blocks
for lessons management





Observe



Share



Learn

Following any exercise or incident, there is an opportunity to learn from experience. We all have a responsibility to reflect on experience and share our observations, so others may benefit. By building a culture of sharing and learning, we can help build a safer, stronger, more disaster resilient NSW.

Observations are the basic building blocks for lessons management and can highlight a good practice to sustain, or an opportunity for improvement. A good observation must contain sufficient details to allow further analysis and identification of learning opportunities.

A range of activities may be undertaken by organisations to gather observations, including: debrief, after action review, real time monitoring and self-reporting.

Your organisation will have its own lessons management process for managing observations. Once you make an observation, follow the process to capture and submit it.

Tips for writing good observations:

- write one matter per observation
- use plain English
- get ideas down first then rewrite if necessary
- sanitise identifying information - no names are necessary
- spell out abbreviations and acronyms, but include the shortened version at least once
- be descriptive and include examples where possible.

Do you know how you can contribute observations within your organisation?

A well written observation consists of five key parts: **Who, When, Where, What,** and **Suggested Solution.**

1

WHO is making the observation?

- What is their position, role and/or agency?
- Do not use names - this is not about identifying, praising or blaming individuals.

2

WHEN provides context of the circumstances and the time these occurred. It also allows for a comparison with other experiences from the same event.

- If the observation relates to an experience or an activity - what is the date?
- Does the activity have a name?

3

WHERE did the experience occur? This allows for a comparison with other experiences in the same location or environment.

- If the observation relates to an experience or an activity - what was the location? For example, was it in specific terrain, an operations centre, as part of a project or during an exercise?

4

WHAT was observed?

- Detail of what occurred, what was seen, heard or felt and the impacts.

5

SUGGESTED SOLUTION - during the collection step, participants may have suggested solutions on what has been or could be done to address the observation.

- Often a suggested solution is not offered.
- Do not feel compelled to come up with a suggested solution is optional at this point.