



26 May 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 8 May 2026, requesting the following information:

- *A breakdown of security incidents from 2023 to 2025 with how many security incidents there have been on a yearly basis, would also appreciate a breakdown of their seriousness.*

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

The safety and security of our staff and the people we serve is our top priority.

Our frontline teams work with a wide range of people every day, and while most interactions are positive, there are occasions when our staff must manage challenging or inappropriate behaviour.

Many organisations have seen an increase in the complexity and stress in clients post-COVID, and the circumstances they are dealing with, and we are no different.

The evidence we're seeing is that our overall security environment is working to de-escalate situations, and functioning as intended to keep people safe.

We are seeing the benefits of significant, long-term improvements to how our sites are designed and how our security systems operate. The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) has invested \$78 million to upgrade service centres across Aotearoa, so that they support safety.

The data show incidents are being well-managed by our security processes and security environment. Trends that are coming through in the data from reported events are:

- The number of security events involving damage or attempted damage were at their lowest in four years in 2025
- The number of security events involving physical injury to staff were at their lowest in three years in 2025
- Lockdowns reduced in 2025 compared to 2024.

Overall security events were down in 2025, compared to 2024, including for incidents classified as severe, major or moderate.

Lockdowns happen when there is an immediate or imminent threat. Many of these incidents are threats over the phone. We work closely with our partners at NZ

Police to ensure any threats or events are managed in the appropriate way by the proper authorities.

Please see attached the Severity Ratings guidance used by staff.

Please refer to the table in the attached **Appendix** which provides counts of all reported security events between 2023 – 2025, broken down by year, severity and contact type.

Please note, the table reported events include clients threatening suicide or self-harm, and events involving both MSD staff and/or Tautiaki, clients, or members of the public, and includes both onsite and offsite events.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services



Appendix

Counts of all reported security events between 2023 – 2025, broken down by year, severity and contact type.

Incident Severity	0. No Consequence	1. Minor	2. Moderate	3. Major	4. Severe	Grand Total
2023	596	4043	2436	208	9	7292
In person	220	1803	1355	150	9	3537
Phone	340	2017	945	43		3345
Other	36	223	136	15		410
2024	648	4563	2770	404	5	8390
In person	243	2000	1526	328	5	4102
Phone	376	2339	1010	49		3774
Other	29	224	234	27		514
2025	920	4220	2701	297	4	8142
In person	293	1909	1534	252	4	3992
Phone	585	2058	980	32		3655

Other	42	253	187	13		495
-------	----	-----	-----	----	--	-----

Notes:

- Reported events include clients threatening suicide or self-harm, and events involving both MSD staff and/or Tautiaki, clients, or members of the public, and includes both onsite and offsite events.
- 'Other' contact includes email, text, social media.

Severity Ratings

STAR doesn't automatically determine the severity of an event or incident. It's up to the manager to determine the severity when they review the event or incident. These guidelines will assist in determining the severity of an event or incident.

Security Severity Rating

No Consequence

No Consequence means the incident does not directly impact on the safety or wellbeing of MSD staff. It will be recorded as 'No Consequence', even if there may be more serious consequences for another party. (e.g. a client threatens to commit a crime against a third party.) Depending on the situation, such as someone in danger, it may still be appropriate to notify the police.

Examples of No Consequence incidents include:

- a client threatens to harm a landlord
- a client mentioned that they damaged non ministry property
- a disagreement has taken place between the client and someone else

Minor

A minor incident has very little impact on staff or others present. Staff are momentarily unsettled but then move on with their day unaffected. There is no lasting impact on the staff member and they are able to carry on.

Examples of Minor incidents include but aren't limited to:

- A client is denied entry due to intoxication
- A client threatens to commit a crime (eg burglary, shoplifting or harm to a third party)
- A client becomes aggressive or swears when unhappy about a decision, but the situation is easily de-escalated (and the staff member does not feel impacted by the behaviour)
- Clients have a fight outside the office (no impact on staff)
- A client threatens to self-harm*

*if the staff member is affected by this threat then the severity should be increased to reflect the impact on the staff member.

A minor incident may still have a significant impact on a third party (ie someone not present and not an MSD employee.) For example, a threat to harm someone's landlord should still be taken seriously and reported to Police but as it did not impact on MSD staff or clients present the consequences for MSD in STAR are minor.

Moderate

A moderate incident has some impact on staff or others present. The impact may be physical (e.g. heart racing, or becoming flustered) or psychological. Those affected by the incident may require reassurance or support and the client causing the incident may need to be warned (or if this is repeat behaviour, it may result in the client being trespassed.) The staff member is affected and may want to debrief both the situation and the actions that were taken with a Trainer/Manager/colleague in relation to what happened technically and interpersonally.

Examples of Moderate incidents include but aren't limited to:

- Unauthorised access to MSD property (including a breach of trespass)
- Threats to harm (including veiled or indirect threats)
- Inappropriate emails or nuisance phone calls
- A client is aggressive or abusive and this cannot be easily de-escalated
- A client threatens to self-harm and the staff member is impacted by this threat

Major

A major incident will have had quite an impact on staff or others present. This may be physical or psychological and includes situations where staff weren't physically harmed, but could have been. The client will almost certainly be warned, and may be trespassed depending on the situation. The staff member may require the assistance of EAP. The staff member is upset and shaken, they may need a break from work and perhaps to leave the office environment altogether until they have had a chance to gather themselves and debrief – this could be for a short period, or potentially for the remainder of the day.

Examples of Major incidents include but aren't limited to:

Attempts to harm staff (by throwing objects, trying to hit/spit or kick, etc.)
Bringing a weapon to a site
Direct threats to the safety of staff (including any threats to kill)
Damage to property
As a general rule if the site is put into lockdown, or there is Police involvement

Severe

A severe incident will have had a significant impact on staff or others present. People will likely require follow up support. It is highly likely the client will be trespassed as a result of the incident. The staff member may require the assistance of EAP. The staff member is significantly / seriously impacted (physical or psychological injury). They are unable to continue work and are likely to require a serious debrief and support to return to work. The incident has impacted them to a level where they have ongoing effects e.g.: sleepless nights, constantly reflecting on what happened. EAP or other support is likely to be required.

Examples of Severe incidents are but aren't limited to:

A client assaults a staff member (including spitting, etc.)
Arson causing the site to be evacuated or closed

Fatality

Fatality is the highest severity rating if a staff member passes away due to an accident, it's not to be used for death threats or suicide threats.

Accident or Injury, Pain and Discomfort, Near Miss or Hazard Severity Rating

Minor

Nil recovery time required
Pain and/or discomfort that does not require medical attention
Nil recovery time required

Moderate

Injury or illness with non-severe temporary disabling effects, including to a person's health
First aid and/or referral to medical professional
Psychological trauma requiring some counselling support
Requires up to 1 month for recovery

Major

Injury or illness with temporary severe disabling effects, including to a person's health
Advanced first aid and a visit to a medical practitioner or hospital
Psychological trauma requiring long-term counselling support
Requires 1-3 months for recovery

Severe

Injury or illness with permanent or long-term severe disabling effects, irreversible health damage and/or death
Severe psychological trauma requiring long-term counselling support
Immediate emergency extensive medical assistance and hospitalisation
Requires 3+ months for recovery