

Accident Investigation

Effective Accident Investigations are Important!

The primary reason for conducting an accident investigation is to “prevent” a repeat of the accident from occurring.

A few other reasons may be; to reduce operating costs, improve morale, improve productivity, improve efficiency, and/or reduce waste.

It is important to remember that accident investigation is “fact-finding” not “fault-finding”.

An accident is defined as “an unplanned, unwanted event that causes injury, illness or property damage”.

For there to be an accident two key conditions must be present at the same time. There must be a Hazardous condition, and there must be an exposure to that hazardous condition.

An incident differs from an accident in that though they are unplanned, and unwanted, they do not result in an injury, illness or property damage. Often times an incident is referred to as a “close call” or “near miss”.

Safety committee members conduct accident investigations in the workplace only if the employer has assigned these investigations to them. It is not a requirement of OR OSHAs.

Employers must investigate all lost-time injuries.

Fatalities and catastrophes must be reported to OR-OSHA within 8 hours.

Serious accidents must be reported to OR-OSHA within 24 hours. *Note: Consider the event a “serious accident” if an employee is admitted to a hospital for observation as a result of injuries suffered from a workplace accident.*

Employees often times are reluctant to report an accident because of fear, peer pressure, or concern that it may affect their job in some one way.

To ensure that accidents will be reported, employees must be encouraged to participate in the “fact-finding” process. The message must be that “hazardous condition” and “unsafe practices” are symptoms of a much bigger problem with a breakdown in the safety and health system. The purpose of the accident investigation then becomes one that will uncover these system problems and provide solutions that will result in long term corrective action.

The process

When a serious accident occurs in the workplace, everyone will be too busy dealing with the emergency at hand to worry about putting together an investigation plan. Our companies investigation plan includes the following and will be posted on the employee bulletin board.

- * Who should be notified about an accident and by whom
- * Who is authorized to notify outside agencies (fire, police, etc)
- * Who is assigned to conduct investigations.
- * What training and at what level is required for accident investigators.
- * Who receives and acts on investigation reports.
- * What timetables are set for conducting the investigation and follow-up actions such as hazard correction.

An accident investigation kit is available in the first aid cabinet.

Once the accident scene has been secured to preserve the evidence, all accident investigations will be conducted in accordance with the following procedures.

1. **Gathering Information:** The first step in accident investigation is to gather information that can give critical clues into the causes associated with the accident. This gathering of information may include pictures, videos, and/or sketches of the scene.

It is important to gather facts and interview witnesses as soon as possible after an accident to ensure the most accurate information is being recorded.

Two things begin disappearing immediately after an accident. They are “evidence” and “memory”.

The effectiveness of the corrective action is dependant on the accuracy of the information gathered.

The best place to conduct an interview is wherever the employee being interviewed feels most comfortable.

The most important interviewing technique you can use to ensure accuracy is to “listen”.

2. **Analyzing the Facts:** Once the information regarding the events of the accident have been gathered, it is time to organize it into a usable form. All the information should be broken down into the following basic categories:

Category 1: Hazardous conditions that existed (symptoms)

Category 2: Hazardous practices that put the employee into a danger zone (symptoms)

Category 3: Breakdowns in the safety and health system that allowed for category 1 and 2 (root causes)

Category 4: Non-essential information

A sequence of events should be developed based on these categories.

3. **An Accident Investigation Report will be written:** Each report will include the following:

- Section 1: **Background / Introduction:** Contains background information that answers who, when, where questions.
- Section 2: **Description of Accident:** Describes the sequence of events you constructed during the cause analysis
- Section 3: **Findings:** Details the symptoms and root causes uncovered during the cause analysis step of the investigation.
- Section 4: **Recommendations:** Proposes recommendations to eliminate or reduce hazardous conditions, practices, policies, and decision making that caused the accident.

Note: Recommendations that only address the symptoms will only give you short term corrections. The root causes must also be addressed.

- Section 5: **Summary:** Contains a brief review of the causes of the accident and recommendations for corrective actions.

4. **Taking Corrective Action:** The owner, supervisor, and/or safety committee will review each accident investigation and **take appropriate** corrective **action** to prevent a repeat of that accident.

5. **Follow Up:** The **safety committee** will conduct a follow up evaluation of the corrective action to ensure that the causes for the accident have been properly addressed.

6. **Critical Review:** Once each year, the safety committee will conduct a critical review of the entire accident investigation program and make recommendations for changes that will improve the effectiveness of these investigations.

Take time to review our Accident Investigation Report form now.

Accident Investigation Plan

Accident Investigation Plan

In the event of an accident

1. Notify your supervisor immediately. *If you are the injured employee and can not, then a co-worker must do so.*
2. Your supervisor will notify outside agencies. *If there is no supervisor available then find a safety committee member and they will make the appropriate notifications.*
3. Your supervisor and a designated safety committee member will conduct all investigation.
4. All accident investigators receive a minimum of four hours of accident investigation training.
5. All accident investigation reports go to the owner with copies going to the supervisor and the safety committee.
6. All accident investigation will begin as soon as the injured employee has been taken care of and the supervisor has determined that the accident scene is safe to enter.

An accident investigation kit is located in the first aid cabinet.

Accident Investigation Procedures

Once the accident scene has been secured to preserve the evidence, all accident investigations will be conducted in accordance with the following procedures.

1. **Gathering Information and Analyzing Facts:** Pictures, video, and or sketches of the scene, that may have valuable information, will be conducted.
2. **Analyzing Facts:** All of the gathered information will be analyzed, symptoms identified, and root causes documented.
3. **An Accident Investigation Report will be written:** Each report will include the following:
 - Section 1: Background / Introduction
 - Section 2: Description of Accident
 - Section 3: Findings
 - Section 4: Recommendations
 - Section 5: Summary
4. **Taking Corrective Action:** The owner, supervisor, and/or safety committee will review each accident investigation and take appropriate corrective action to prevent a repeat of that accident.
5. **Follow Up:** The safety committee will conduct a follow up evaluation of the corrective action to ensure that the causes for the accident have been properly addressed.
6. **Critical Review:** Once each year, the safety committee will conduct a critical review of the entire accident investigation program and make recommendations for changes that will improve the effectiveness of these investigations.

Owner Signature

Date

Accident Investigation Report

Section III. FINDINGS (Attach separate page if necessary)

Surface Cause(s) (symptoms) (Unsafe conditions and/or work practices)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Root Cause(s) (Policies, procedures, supervision, training, decision making, other factors)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Section IV. RECOMMENDATIONS (Attach separate page if necessary)

Immediate Corrections. (To reduce or eliminate unsafe conditions and/or work practices)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Long Term Corrections. (Policies, procedures, training, etc. to ensure unsafe conditions and/or practices do not recur.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____
