

# Accident Investigation

## **Purpose**

Accident prevention and control of hazards is the result of a well designed and executed safety and health program. One of the keys to a successful program includes unbiased, prompt and accurate accident investigations. The basic purpose of these investigations is to determine measures that can be taken to prevent similar accidents in the future.

## **Policy**

It is the policy of this company that investigations of all work related accidents; injuries and illnesses, and near misses are to be conducted in a professional manner to identify probable causes and are to be analyzed to develop specific management actions for the prevention of future accidents.

## **Responsibilities**

### *Management*

Conduct accident prevention and investigation training for supervisors.  
Ensure all accidents and injuries are properly investigated.  
Ensure immediate and long term corrective actions are taken to prevent reoccurrence.  
Maintain Accident Reports on file.  
Ensure proper entries are made on the OSHA 300 Log and First Report of Injury.  
Provide all necessary medical care for injured workers.

### *Supervisors*

Conduct immediate initial accident investigations.  
Report all accidents to management as soon after the event as possible.  
Collect and preserve all evidence that may be useful in an investigation.  
Conduct interviews of witnesses in a polite professional manner.  
Do not attempt to find or assign blame for accidents.  
Take action to protect people and property from secondary effects of accidents.

### *Employees*

Immediately report all accidents & injuries to their supervisor.  
Assist as requested in all accident investigations.  
Report all hazardous conditions and near-misses to supervisors.

## **Hazard Control**

*Engineering Controls* - There are numerous engineered safeguards used to protect employees and prevent exposure to hazards. Examples of engineering controls are machine guards, safety controls, isolation of hazardous areas, monitoring devices, etc.

***Administrative Controls*** - These controls involve the use of procedures, assessments, inspection, records to monitor and ensure safe practices and environments are maintained. Other administrative controls are in place to identify new hazards and implement corrective action. Examples of administrative controls are periodic inspections, equipment operating and maintenance procedures, hazard analysis, selection and assignment of personal protective equipment, etc.

***Training Controls*** - This aspect of hazard control is used to ensure employees are fully and adequately trained to safely perform all tasks to which they are assigned. No employee is to attempt any task without proper training in the equipment used, required personal protective equipment, specific hazards and their control and emergency procedures. Examples of training controls are initial new hire safety orientation, job specific safety training and periodic refresher training.

## **Supervisor Involvement**

In most cases, the immediate supervisor will conduct the initial phase of an accident investigation. This initial activity is primarily a recording of facts involved in the accident, list of affected employees and witnesses. Direct supervisors are familiar with employee's work environment & assigned tasks. Supervisors must take the accident situation under control and immediately eliminate or control hazards to others.

### **Immediate Steps**

1. Provide First Aid for any injured persons.
2. Eliminate or control hazards
3. Document accident scene information to determine the cause.
4. Interview witnesses immediately.

## **Accident Investigation Procedures**

### ***Initial Investigation Procedures***

The initial investigation has three purposes:

- Prevent further possible injury and property damage
- Collect facts about the accident
- Collect and preserve evidence

### **Steps**

1. Secure the area. Do not disturb the scene unless a hazard exists.
2. Prepare the necessary sketches and photographs. Label each carefully and keep accurate records.
3. Interview each victim and witness. Also interview those who were present before the accident and those who arrived at the site shortly after the accident. Keep accurate records of each interview.

## ***Follow-up Accident Investigation***

The follow-up investigation is used to analyze data and determine the causes and corrective actions necessary to prevent reoccurrence.

### Steps

1. Analyze the data obtained in the initial investigation.
2. Repeat any of the prior steps, if necessary.
3. Determine
  - Why the accident occurred.
  - A likely sequence of events and probable causes.
  - Determine the most likely causes.
  - Conduct a post-investigation briefing.
  - Prepare a summary report, including the recommended actions to prevent a recurrence.

## **Conducting Interviews**

All interviews should be conducted in a quiet and private location. It is essential to get preliminary statements as soon as possible from all witnesses. Investigators should not provide any facts to the witness - only ask non-leading questions.

1. Explain the purpose of the investigation (accident prevention) and put each witness at ease.
2. Listen, let each witness speak freely, and be professional, courteous and considerate.
3. Take notes without distracting the witness. Use a tape recorder only with consent of the witness.
4. Use sketches and diagrams to help the witness.
5. Emphasize areas of direct observation. Label hearsay accordingly.
6. Be sincere and do not argue with the witness.
7. Word each question carefully and be sure the witness understands.
8. Record the exact words used by the witness to describe each observation.
8. Identify each witness (name, address, occupation, years of experience, etc.).

## **Reports**

An accident investigation is not complete until a report is prepared and submitted to management. To be an effective tool, an accident report should be clear and concise. The purpose of the investigation is to prevent future accidents. Obvious accident causes are most probably symptoms of a "root cause" problem which should be identified.

All accident reports will be maintained on file. They shall receive timely review by management to ensure proper corrective actions have been taken. Refer to Attachment I for Accident Investigation Report.

First Report of Injury (C20) reports will be made and submitted to the insurance carrier within 24 hours of notification of injury or illness. OSHA 300 Log entries will be made within 6 working days.

### **Investigation Forms**

1. Supervisor Accident Statement
2. Accident Witness Statement
3. Injured Employee Statement
4. Accident Investigation Report
5. Near Miss Report