



Accident Investigation

Sample Procedures 



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OVERVIEW

_____ (Company's Name) utilizes a formal accident investigation procedure as an effective technique for preventing the re-occurrence of future accidents. The term "incident" is also associated with accidents and some times is used interchangeably. An incident is an undesired event that, under slightly different circumstances, could have resulted in personal harm, property damage and even a near miss. For loss prevention and control purposes, an incident should be treated the same as an accident. All accidents (incidents) should be investigated and have corrective measures implemented.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

The basis of a good accident investigation process is an effective accident reporting system. One common mistake a company will make is to report and investigate only serious accidents. All accidents observed or sustained in _____ (Company's Name) must be reported at once to your immediate supervisor - whether they result in personal injury, illness, property damage, or simply a near miss. When the causes are removed, serious accidents can be prevented. Immediate action regarding accidents can prevent future mishaps.

Accident investigation is a process that is used to discover the facts of an accident, analyze or evaluate those facts to find the accident's cause(s) and make plans to eliminate or control the cause of the accident.

CONTENTS

This chapter explains the recommended approach and methods of investigating all accidents so that _____ (Company's Name) will be able to:

- Develop and implement a process for investigating accidents;
- Analyze an accident to determine causes;
- Take corrective action to prevent future accidents; and
- Develop and implement a method for collecting and preserving evidence.

Each element of this approach is critical to the loss control and risk management process within _____ (Company's Name).

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

_____ (Company's Name) accident investigation process is used to discover the facts of an accident. The process involves analyzing and evaluating those facts to find the cause(s) of the accident. After the cause(s) are discovered, plans to eliminate future accidents by controlling the cause(s) can be made.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Each step of the accident investigation process should be conducted thoroughly. Where noted, use the investigation forms indicated by the Step. The following procedures can be used for each step of the process.

STEP 1. NOTICE OF THE EVENT

Find out that an accident has occurred immediately from the injured person or fellow employees.

Note: People may not want to report an accident for many reasons. Try to establish good rapport with everyone so that you are able to determine what is occurring in the workplace.

STEP 2. GO TO THE ACCIDENT SCENE IMMEDIATELY

Go directly to the scene of the accident. Attend to the injured party with first aid or call an ambulance if appropriate. Discuss the accident with the injured person at the time, if possible. Be sure to secure the accident scene so that further accidents do not occur and so that the physical facts in the accident scene do not get touched.

STEP 3. INVESTIGATE THE ACCIDENT

Utilizing an accident "Investigation Kit", the accident must be investigated. When investigating an accident, the investigator should gather the facts from the four P's: **people**, **parts** (equipment), **position** (job junctions) and **paper** (any records or documents). During an accident investigation, the investigator must answer all why, what, where, when, who and how questions for each of the four P's.

The following information should also be considered:

- Identify all of the elements that could possibly contribute to the accident;
- People and their actions;
- Materials, tools and equipment;
- Physical scene of the accident;
- The work or activity that involved the injured person;
- Obtain additional information from other sources, including;
 - Memory
 - Inspections
 - Observation
 - Other people
 - Written records

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The following should be utilized when interviewing witnesses: Separate witnesses, then interview them one at a time in a private location. Put the witness at ease by saying, "I am just trying to find out as much as I can about the accident so it will not happen again. If I could, I would like to ask you a few questions about the accident."

Take notes: Repeat the story back to the witness to make sure you have it right. End the interview on a positive note, like: "Thank you for your help, (name). The company hopes to discover and correct the cause of this accident, so that it won't happen again."

STEP 4. ANALYZE THE FACTS

When analyzing the facts of an accident, the follow should be considered:

- Use a team approach
- Map the process
- Avoid preconceptions
- Brainstorm to identify all contributing causes
- Compare accident data

STEP 5. DETERMINE ACCIDENT CAUSES

Use the information from STEP 3 & 4 to determine the most probable causes of the accident.

STEP 6. DEVELOP CORRECTIVE ACTION

Brainstorm on methods or procedures that could be used to remedy the accident's causes. This may be a physical change, procedural change or additional employee training.

For example, a fire breaks out in an office and the cause is identified as an overloaded electrical outlet. A physical change would be to remove the unnecessary electrical cords plugged into the outlet. A procedural change would be to inspect the outlets on a regular basis. Employee training would be informing all employees on the hazards associated with overloading electrical outlets.

Once the investigator has determined the corrective action, all members and employees should be informed of changes and trained on the new system.

STEP 7 REPORT TO MANAGEMENT

Make sure the form is accurate, complete and clear before you submit it to management.

STEP 8. IMPLEMENT CORRECTIVE ACTION WITH FOLLOW UP

In order to prevent the accident from occurring again, follow up and communication is necessary.

(Company's Name) feels this can be accomplished by letting employees know what can cause an accident and by asking them to support a safe work environment.

SUMMARY:

(Company's Name) feels that uncovering the causes of all accidents will prevent the occurrence of future hazardous condition or unsafe action which will help make the workplace safe.

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ACCIDENT ANALYSIS GUIDE

WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

This Guide is to be used only to **stimulate** questioning. Some of these questions may not be applicable, nor should questioning be limited to these alone.

"W" Questions to Ask	If the Immediate Cause Appears to be:	
	A Situation	An Action
WHY?	– did it exist? – had no one noticed and correct it?	– was it being done? – was it being done this way? – was it (job or detail) necessary?
WHAT?	– caused it to exist? – caused it to be involved?	– was its purpose? – other way could it be done? – details could be eliminated? – instructions were not followed?
WHERE?	– was it? – was its source? – else does it exist? – can I find out?	– should it be done? – else is it being done?
WHEN?	– did it occur? – do similar conditions occur?	– should it be done?
WHO?	– was responsible for it? – can give me answers? – should take corrective action?	– is best qualified to do it? – can give me answers – can show me what was being done?
HOW?	– should it be corrected? – can't be avoided in the future?	– is the best way to do it? – can it (job or detail) be improved?



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