



Accident Investigation and Prevention Policy

Company Name:

Policy/Procedure ID Number:

Date:

General Industry

This is **(Your Company Name)** Accident Investigation and Prevention Program which applies to all our work operations.

(Employee Name) will be responsible for overall direction of the safety program.

Introduction

The purpose of establishing an Accident Prevention Program is to preserve the health and lives of employees through the prevention of accidents, injuries and illnesses, and the promotion of safe and healthy work conditions as the key elements in day-to-day operations. Both management's commitment and employees' responsibility are necessary to accomplish this goal.

All incidents and accidents including company employees and contractors resulting in a recordable injury, where any significant property damage occurred, or where the potential for a serious event exists, will be investigated promptly. Report recordable serious accidents by telephone or fax to the appropriate federal, state, or local authorities and the insurance company's claim department within 24 hours. Within eight (8) hours after the death of any employee from a work-related incident or the in-patient hospitalization of three or more employees as a result of a work-related incident, you must orally report the fatality/multiple hospitalization by telephone or in person to the area office of the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor, that is nearest to the site of the incident. You call OSHA toll-free at 1-800-321-OSHA or (1-800-321-6742).

Establishing an Incident Investigation Program

An investigation takes place after an incident has occurred, and is intended to prevent the incident from reoccurring. Every incident has a cause, and those involving only a slight injury may reveal just as much about inadequate safety measures, as one that results in a serious injury. All occupational incidents, illnesses and near misses (those unplanned events that do not result in injury, financial loss, or property damage) should be investigated.

Every Investigation must answer the following questions:

- How was the injury or the damage incurred?
- Exactly what happened where?
- Under what accompanying or special circumstances did the incident occur?
- What should be done to eliminate or control the hazard(s) that caused the incident?



Because the immediate supervisor is usually first on the scene, he/she must be trained how to begin the investigation. The safety staff will be involved soon afterward, but it is extremely important to speak to all eyewitnesses before the facts get fuzzy or before people have a chance to change their minds about what they saw.

A productive incident investigation is prompt, thorough, and objective.

Steps to Follow when Conducting the Investigation

Interview the injured employee and any bystander who may have witnessed the incident:

- If the employee does not need immediate medical treatment and is physically able to talk about the incident, ask him what happened.
- Interview any participants in, or witnesses to, the incident. Allow them to speak freely, without interruption. If there is a disagreement that cannot be resolved, make a note of it for further investigation.
- Stress the fact that you want to discover the facts, not find fault or place the blame on anyone.

Write down the facts:

- What part of the body was injured or affected by the incident?
- What type of incident was it, or in what manner was the person injured?
- What was the cause of the incident, the object, substance, or part of the premises in which the hazardous condition existed? Be specific.
- What was the hazardous condition or circumstances involved?
- What was the nature of the injury?
- What was the source of the injury, the object, substance, or bodily motions that produced it?
- What was the unsafe act, if any, which permitted the incident to occur?

Analyze the Incident and take steps to ensure that it does not happen again:

- Correct the hazard, immediately, if possible.
- If equipment is involved, track the problem to its source through the chain of events.
- Provide the employees with additional safety training where appropriate.
- Review incident statistics to find out if the incident is part of a pattern of incident occurrence within the department affected. Check the employee's past record and what safety training he/she has received.
- Study the possibility of changing methods, procedures, equipment, layout, etc., to reduce the hazard.

Incident Investigation

The incident investigation has only one purpose: the determination of the basic cause of the incidents so future incidents may be prevented. The Supervisor's Investigation Report attached is intended to develop the information for this purpose, and must be used for all such investigations.

Investigation of incidents will be done by the immediate supervisor of the employee involved or by the supervisor who is in charge of the property or area where the incident occurred.

The Supervisor will be made aware of a recordable injury by:

- His personal observation of an incident or being notified by others shortly after the incident.



- The Health Services Department should complete the top form of Supervisor's Investigation Report through the Part(s) of the Body Injured section.

The Supervisor must complete the form by the end of the shift, if possible.

Since conditions change and memories fade quickly, investigation shall be conducted as soon as possible after the accident. However, make certain all necessary steps have been taken to prevent further injury or damage before beginning the investigation. Make certain the injured person is being cared for.

In conducting the investigation, avoid blame fixing or fault finding. Develop the facts of the incident from the person involved and from witnesses.

Remember, the immediate or apparent cause (an unsafe act/condition) is the real or basic cause of the accident. This is the point at which corrective action should be directed. Make certain the action taken will, in fact, correct this basic cause. Also make certain the corrective action will not create other problems, which can result in incidents.

The appropriate remedy will include one or more of the following:

- Additional training
- Disciplinary action
- Modifications to equipment
- Modifications to procedures
- Request for a review by other individuals

Any judgmental or demeaning remarks are unprofessional, non-productive, and will not be tolerated.

If the result of the investigation indicates disciplinary action should be taken, the Safety Manager will advise the appropriate employee so proper disciplinary steps can be taken.

The Safety Manager will review all investigation reports. Incomplete or improperly completed reports will be returned to the individual making the report for proper completion.

Completing the Investigation Report

Once the investigation process is complete and the facts are known, preparing the report should not be difficult. The top most senior manager, or company owner, should review the Accident Investigation Report for completeness and accuracy, initial and date the report, and forward it to the safety coordinator for further processing as necessary.

Questions one through sixteen, twenty and twenty-four on the Incident Investigation Report forms are self-explanatory but are important for administrative and follow-up reasons. The name of the treating physician and clinic/hospital address may not be immediately known by the foreman investigating the accident, and can be completed later.

Accident Type - This explains the type of incident being investigated, i.e., fall from ladder, stepped on nail, electrical shock, struck by a vehicle, fire, lifting materials, etc.



Source - This describes the object or substance inflicting the injury or otherwise involved in the incident. Some examples are power tools, an icy floor, shredder, sheer, electrical wiring, etc.

Nature of Injury - This identifies the kind of injury resulting from the accident, such as an electrical burn, concussion, back strain, asphyxiation, etc.

Property Damage - Describe what was damaged as a result of the accident (or near miss), i.e., backhoe, power tool, building, maintenance vehicle, etc.

Nature of Damage - This deals with the extent of the damaged property such as a crushed fender, backhoe rollover, destroyed tool, broken ladder, conveyer collapse, etc.

Source of Object Inflicting Damage - The source of the accident could be such things as a faulty electrical systems, an excavation cave-in resulting in an injury, an unrepaired ladder, a snow covered parking lot, etc.

Cause - This is the most critical question in the investigation because it identifies the act or condition requiring change that will control recurrence of similar accidents. The investigator needs to get beyond just the employee involved; evaluate all of the management operational controls that could be responsible for the accident. Do not state that the accident was a result of employee carelessness. Specifically define the unsafe act or condition involved that may at first appears to be carelessness, i.e. distraction, noise stress, heat, cold, or other natural and unnatural factors.

Severity Potential - The investigating foreman should be able to determine the accident severity based on the facts of the case. For example, the injury or death severity potential for a 10-foot trench collapse in sandy soil is much greater (major), than a 4-foot trench collapse in clay.

Recurrence Potential - The experience of the foreman, crew and nature of the work will help determine the possibility of like accidents happening sometime in the future. The foreman needs to evaluate the failed possibilities of the management control systems in place at the time of the accident.

Have Similar Accident(s) Occurred Before? - This directly relates to question 28. If similar accidents did in fact take place in the past, it strongly indicates that some management system, some device or control measure failed.

Reasons For Recurrence - Fully describe what failed and why.



SAMPLE INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

SAMPLE INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Identification:

1. Company or Branch _____

2. Department _____

3. Date of Accident _____

4. Time _____ am/pm

5. Date Reported _____

6. Name of Injured _____

7. Age _____

8. Job Title _____

9. Experience _____ (years/months)

10. Sex M ___ F ___

11. Employee ID/Clock Number _____

12. On Premises _____

13. Off Premises _____

14. Employee Death ___ Y* ___ N *Within eight (8) hours after the death of any employee from a work-related incident or the in-patient hospitalization of three or more employees as a result of a work-related incident, you must orally report the fatality/multiple hospitalization by telephone or in person to the Area Office of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor, that is nearest to the site of the incident. You may also use the OSHA toll-free central telephone number, 1-800-321-OSHA (1-800-321-6742).

15. Person treating injury (physician/hospital name and address)

16. Did the injury result in lost time? _____ Change in duties? _____

Injury:

17. Accident type _____

18. What was the object or substance inflicting injury _____?

19. Nature of injury _____

20. Part of body _____

Property Damage:



21. What was damaged? _____

22. Nature of damage _____

23. Source of object-inflicting damage _____

24. Estimated cost of repair _____

25. Description (describe what happened, who was involved, where, when, why and how)

26. Cause (identify unsafe acts or conditions contributing factors)

Evaluation:

27. Severity potential

Major _____

Serious _____

Minor _____

28. Recurrence potential

Frequent _____

Occasional _____

Rare _____

29. Have similar accident(s) occurred before? If so when _____

30. Reasons for recurrence _____

31. Correction (describe steps taken to prevent future accidents) _____

32. Follow-up (send a copy of the report for follow-up)

Immediate _____ 7 days _____ 30 days _____ 60 days _____

Activity (list actions taken and dates) _____

Signature of Investigator _____

Date Report Completed _____

Print Name and Title _____



Injury Management Program

An injury management program is a post injury procedure designed to ensure quality medical care, contain medical costs, reduce opportunities for litigation and return injured workers to full gainful employment at the earliest possible time.

Management's Role

The soaring cost of workers' compensation insurance to companies must be contained. Rather than accepting injury related expenses as a fixed cost of doing business, companies need to be proactive in this program and focus our resources on:

- Documentation
- Educating employees
- Loss reporting
- Return to work (RTW)
- Utilization of medical providers

The success of this program is dependent on a strong partnership between management staff, employees, medical care providers and insurance companies.

Implementation of the Program

Fear and uncertainty are primary reasons for injured employees to delay reporting injuries and to seek assistance from attorneys. This may be due to concern over medical bills, lost income or even the loss of employment. Companies should take whatever action is necessary to alleviate these fears, specifically:

- All employees should be provided with an explanation of the workers' compensation system and benefits it will provide.
- Company directed/recommended providers should be provided: names, telephone numbers and addresses posted on bulletin boards.
- Direct injured employees to company selected medical care providers if state law permits.
- Of particular importance, all workers should be schooled in the company's substance abuse policy, fraudulent claim prevention, and alternative job duties and other aspects of returning to work.
- The workforce should be instructed in accident reporting procedures.

Loss Reporting

- Procedures should be established which will give all employees the responsibility and incentive to report all accidents and near-miss incidents to their supervisor immediately.
- The state required First Report of Injury should be prepared and reported to the company's insurer within 24 hours by fax or by telephone. Follow state requirements for distribution of hard copies.

Utilization of Medical Providers

The selection of physicians, clinics or hospitals is an important injury management decision. Companies should either directly or indirectly manage the medical care provided to injured employees to the maximum extent permitted by state workers' compensation regulations:

- Chosen medical facilities must provide quality care, effective service and pricing to fit company guidelines.



- Return to Work (RTW).
- Use Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO) if available.
- Whenever possible, encourage physicians treating employees to visit the company to observe operations to better understand the way business is conducted.

Return-to-Work (RTW)

To effectively manage the costs incurred as a result of work related injuries, the following eight-point plan should be closely followed and monitored:

- A copy of the injury report describing how the injury occurred, if available.
- A description of the employee's current job, with details on postures (standing, sitting, walking) and physical demands (lifting-weight and frequency, hours worked, tool usage, etc.).
- A statement of the company's position on returning injured employees to work.
- Ensure that initial treatment is provided. Immediately following an injury, provide necessary first aid and send the employee to a medical provider as required. Document all details of the date and time of the injury, the type of first aid provided and the name of the physician, clinic or hospital where the employee received treatment.
- Notify Claims. Contact the company Claim Office immediately following an injury, preferably by phone or fax.
- Provide the job function evaluation form to the treating physician.

Attending Physician's Report

It is critical to obtain the treating physician's response to any work restrictions the injured worker may have. If the doctor has the job function evaluation as a guide, an informed response should be obtainable.

Contact the Employee

Employee contact should be made in person or by phone within 24 hours:

- Reassure the employee of the company's commitment to their well-being.
- Assess the employee's understanding of the treatment he or she received.
- Ask if the employee has any specific questions about future plans, treatment, etc.

Follow Up with the Physician

Within 24 hours of initial treatment, obtain details regarding recommended additional treatment, return-to-work expectations and specific job restrictions. Discuss a specific timetable for the employee's return to work.

Maintain Contact with the Employee, Physician, and the Claims Handler

During the employee's absence from work, continue to monitor progress:

- Contact the employee at least once every week to inquire about their recovery and express our concern for their return to good health.
- Contact the physician periodically to discuss recovery progress and any changes in the timetable for the employee's return to work.
- Keep company claim handler informed about the employee's return to work status.



Establish an Injury Management Record

For each case involving lost time and/or follow up medical treatment, establish an injury management record. All activities regarding treatment and recovery should be logged and documented whenever possible. Explain any progress toward return to work and discuss this with our claim representative and the physician or other parties involved. Indicate the date the employee returned to work and in what capacity (full duty, part-time, limited physical activity, etc.).

The record should include:

- A copy of the injury report
- A log of all phone conversations with the employee, physician, and claim representative
- Copies of medical bills
- Documentation of initial treatment
- Progress reports from the physician

File Construction and Maintenance

A medical case file (aka: Injury Management Checklist) should be maintained on every employee injury requiring medical treatment if lost work time is anticipated due to a workplace accident. These medical files should be separated from standard employee files and secured apart from all other file information being maintained on the injured employee.

All documentation concerning the treatment of an employee injury should be maintained in this file. This includes a copy of the Employer's First Report of Injury, copy of the Employee's First Report of Injury (if required by the state), medical bills received, medical bills paid, and correspondence to and from all parties involved until the injured worker returns to full gainful employment without medical restrictions.

There are good reasons to maintain a medical case management file. These include:

- Maintaining strict confidentiality between injured employee and employer. Federal and some state laws restrict the type of information that can be distributed as well as the parties who can receive the information.
- Provides for a monitoring system to keep company management current on the status of the injured employee and progress being made on getting that individual back into the normal workflow.
- Providing a checklist for the company representative managing the case which documents actions taken to protect the rights of the company and the injured employee.
- The securing of data necessary to manage the claim.



Sample Incident/Accident Questionnaire

WHO:

1. Who was injured?
2. Who saw the incident?
3. Who was working with him/her?
4. Who had instructed/assigned him/her?
5. Who else was involved?
6. Who else can help prevent recurrence?

WHAT:

7. What was the incident?
8. What was the injury?
9. What was he/she doing?
10. What had he/she been told to do?
11. What tools was he/she using?
12. What machine was involved?
13. What operation was he/she performing?
14. What training and specific instruction had he/she been given?
15. What specific precautions were necessary?
16. What specific precautions were given?
17. What protective equipment should have been used?
18. What protective equipment was he/she using?
19. What had other persons done that contributed to the accident?
20. What problem or question did he/she encounter?
21. What did he/she or witnesses do when the incident occurred?
22. What extenuating circumstances were involved?
23. What did the witnesses see?
24. What will be done to prevent recurrence?
25. What safety rules are needed?
26. What new rules are needed?
27. If the incident involved an equipment failure, was the equipment of faulty construction or design?

WHEN:

28. When did incident occur?
29. When did he/she start on that job?
30. When was he/she assigned on the job?
31. When were the hazards pointed out to him/her?
32. When had his supervisor last checked on job progress?
33. When did he/she first sense something was wrong?

WHY:

34. Why was he/she injured?
35. Why did he/she do what he/she did?
36. Why did other people do what they did?
37. Why wasn't protective equipment used?
38. Why weren't specific instructions given to him/her?



39. Why was he/she in the position he/she was in?
40. Why was he/she using the tools or machine he/she used?
41. Why didn't he/she check with his/her supervisor when he/she noted things weren't as they should be?
42. Why did he/she continue working under the circumstances?
43. Why wasn't the supervisor there at the time?

WHERE:

44. Where did the accident occur?
45. Where was he/she at the time?
46. Where were fellow workers at the time?
47. Where were other people who were involved at the time?
48. Where were witnesses when the accident occurred?

HOW:

49. How did he/she get injured?
50. How could he/she have avoided it?
51. How could fellow workers have avoided it?
52. How could supervisor have prevented it? (Could he/she?)

