

ACCIDENT / INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Spicers Safety Team

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The Investigation Process

Interviewing the Injured Employee and Witnesses

- Get a brief overview of the situation from witnesses & injured employee as soon as possible after the incident.
- Interview each person separately
- Witnesses should not confer prior to interview because of the “foibles of memory.”
- The purpose is not to create a detailed report yet, but enough to understand the basics of what happened.

The Investigation Process

- Put the person at ease and reassure them that this is a fact-finding process only.
 - ❖ Witnesses may be reluctant to discuss the incident if they think someone will get in trouble.
 - ❖ Remind them that these facts will be used to prevent a recurrence of the incident and an injury to someone else in the future.

The Investigation Process

- **Interviewing and Fact Finding**

- Is the critical part of the process simply because it is important to know how and what happened
- The five “W’s”
 - Who (was involved? / witnesses?)
 - What (equipment, materials, process ?)
 - When (timing)
 - Where (exactly)
 - Why
 - How (ask for a “safe” demo)
 - Question, Question, Question, QUESTION !!!

The Interview (cont.)

- You may need to ask the same question 2 -3 times
 - Get a firm answer! But **don't intimidate or interrogate**
 - Clarify statements by repeating them back to the witnesses in order to test your understanding
 - Take notes . . .
- Ask open-ended questions:
 - “What did you see?”
 - “What happened?”
- Do not make suggestions (otherwise known as leading questions.)
- Don't help the witness by filling in the blanks. Patience and silence (on your part) can be golden!

The Interview (cont.)

Use closed-ended questions to gain specific detail.

“Where were you standing?”

“What time did it happen?”

Again repeat answers back to test your understanding.

Explore: What was going on at the time of the injury?

- Just prior to the injury
- Earlier the same day of the injury; yesterday; last week ?

The Interview Process (cont.)

- Avoid asking leading questions
 - Bad:* “why was the forklift operator driving recklessly?”
 - Good:* “describe everything you can remember about how the forklift was being operated?”
- If the witness or injured employee begins to offer reasons, excuses, or explanations, politely remind them to stick only with the facts and let them know that you will....
- Come back to them later for their belief about other factors (which could be based on insider information that you need to assess situation).

The Interview Process (cont.)

- Ask the witness/injured employee for recommendations to prevent recurrence; employees most familiar with the task can be the experts. Engage through valuing input!
- Repeat what you have been told. Correct any misunderstanding (test your understanding through clarification!)
- In a non-intimidating way, obtain a written, signed statement from the witness/ injured employee. Interview notes signed by the witness/injured employee may be used if they are uncomfortable in writing a statement.

Completing the Report

- The report is meant to guide you toward the goal of getting accurate and useful information.
- It is critical for documentation
- It's OK to add extra pages
- Be sure to list all the issues or causes identified

The Final Product

- Focus on preventing future occurrences
- Look to improve our work practices & performance
- Look to improve productivity and employee retention

Identify options for Solutions & Corrective Actions

- Corrective Actions beyond the immediate accident should be included

The Final Product

Action Plan Overview

- Critical to the investigation
- Addresses system causes
- Addresses incident events
- Fixes system deficiencies
- Clearly identifies actions
- Are practical, feasible & achievable
- Eliminate or reduces risks
- Identify who will handle & by when
- Tracking Corrective Actions is critical

The Final Product

- Reports should be reviewed and signed off by next management level
- Safety Manager's Responsibilities:
 - Assign tasks, review dates for completion
 - Follow up & verify corrective actions
 - Allocate resources and personnel

Accident/Incident Investigation

Ultimate Goal of Accident Investigation

Prevention