

Incident Investigation

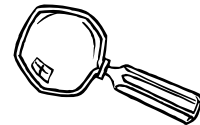
Definitions of Basic Terms

- ◆ Accident
 - An unplanned incident resulting in an event that has caused — or is capable of producing — physical harm and or property damage
- ◆ Near Miss or Near Accident
 - An unplanned incident that does *not* result an injury or property damage; it has the *potential* to inflict injury or property damage if not corrected — near misses predict 75% of industrial injuries!
- ◆ Hazards
 - Any existing or potential condition or procedure which, by itself or through interaction with other variables, may result in death, injury, or property damage
- ◆ Hazard Recognition
 - Establish a program to recognize, evaluate, and eliminate unsafe acts and conditions from the work environment

What Is an Incident Investigation?

An organized and planned collection of the facts — the end goals:

- ◆ Determine *who, what, where, and when* of the near miss or accident
- ◆ Develop a remedy to correct the unsafe condition, act, and work practice
- ◆ Never use the investigation to fix blame



Written Action Plan for an Investigation

Develop, write, and practice often the organization's incident investigation plan.

An effective plan contains:

- ◆ Authority from senior management to conduct the necessary investigations
- ◆ Names of the individuals in charge of the investigations
- ◆ Means to quickly notify the investigating team
- ◆ Instructions on the use of special equipment to be worn or brought to the scene
- ◆ Incident investigation procedures



Conducting the Investigation

- ◆ Isolate the incident investigation area

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- Permit the emergency response personnel (police, firefighters) to perform their duties — as soon as these procedures are completed and the injured are treated, isolate the area

Incident Investigation *(continued)*

Conducting the Investigation *(continued)*

- Block off the entire area surrounding the scene with barriers or yellow tape
- Use a systematic approach to the investigation
- Look for the basic — or root — cause that contributed directly or indirectly to the accident
- Note any deficiencies in management
- ◆ Make a permanent record of the evidence — follow the rule of thumb: *when in doubt, record it!*
 - Written notes/sketches
 - Photography
 - Videotape
 - Dictated observation
 - Diagrams
- ◆ Interview witnesses
 - Conduct the interview as soon as possible at the accident site
 - Conduct one-on-one interviews
 - Relax the interviewee, explain the process
 - Ask questions that do not require a yes or no answer; use an open-ended format
 - Be a good listener, take notes and review what you heard



Reporting Accidents

- ◆ Write a comprehensive accident report — include the findings, causes, and recommended corrective actions



OSHA Recordkeeping Requirements

Injuries/illnesses must be recorded if they result in any of the following:

- ◆ Death
- ◆ One or more lost workdays
- ◆ Restriction of motion or work
- ◆ Loss of consciousness
- ◆ Transfer to another job
- ◆ Medical treatment beyond first aid

Remember — the purpose of *incident investigation* is to record the findings and causes, and to make recommendations to prevent recurrence — not to find blame!



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