

Accident Review Process

An important part of accident prevention is the correction of accident causes. When an accident occurs, it must be investigated and causes determined. The purpose of investigating is not to assign blame, but to gather information needed to determine reasonable and practical action for the solution of the problem. The investigation is made to determine one thing, the prevention of similar accidents.

Typically, the immediate supervisor of the individual involved in the accident should perform the accident investigation, since the supervisor is the one responsible for getting work accomplished without undue delay or interruption. Accident investigation reports are an important means of accident prevention because they record the basic facts of each injury and are used in accident injury analysis. Accurate reporting of accidents help obtain information such as:

- How was the employee injured
- What caused the accident
- What can be done to prevent a recurrence
- What can be gained from the accident for future use

The investigation of the “causes” of all accidents must be objective, factual, and free from any form of punishment. The accident investigation report should be completed as soon as possible after an accident occurs. Employees should be encouraged to report all injuries in a timely manner.

Here are the facts an accident investigator must determine:

1. Who got hurt and what was the nature of his/her injuries?
2. What was the injured person doing when the accident occurred?
3. What other persons were involved, directly or indirectly, in the accident?
4. What physical factors were involved? Equipment missing, defective, not being used?
5. Were job procedures being violated? How? Why?

In other words, what factors contributed which if removed, would have prevented the accident. In many accidents, several factors contribute, often involving both unsafe conditions and unsafe acts. Thorough analysis of cause factors usually points toward specific changes in work procedures or work conditions.

What next?

Now that you have identified the “root causes” it is imperative that your company implement controls and training if needed to prevent future occurrences. The biggest mistake that most companies make is that they do not share the information with their managers, supervisors, and employees. Use the injury as a loss lesson to raise awareness throughout your company.