

Section 6: Investigation of Incidents (2010.06.16 version)

6.1 Introduction

Purpose:

The purpose of an incident investigation is to determine the cause and to implement suitable corrective measures. The immediate supervisor is responsible for conducting incident investigations. The point is to find fact, not fault. Supervisors are reminded to focus on how and why the event occurred, rather than who should be blamed.

Scope:

The investigation is a systematic process of examination, observation and inquiry comprised of three parts including:

Description of Incident:

The description identifies in detail how, when and where the incident occurred including all related factors (i.e. weights, heights, distances, time of day, weather conditions etc);

Basic and Contributory Cause of Incident (Why did it occur?):

What acts, failures to act and conditions contributed to the incident?

Recommendations:

After the cause of incident has been determined, recommendations to prevent recurrence should now be prepared.

6.2 Responsibilities

District Responsibilities:

- a) To ensure that all employees are aware of the requirements to report incidents and injuries;
- b) To ensure that investigations are undertaken when required;
- c) To ensure that all those conducting investigations are adequately trained;
- d) To ensure that recommendations are followed.

First Aid Attendants Responsibilities:

- a) To treat all injuries in an appropriate manner;
- b) To ensure that injured workers notify their immediate supervisor;
- c) To complete all reports as required.

Employees Responsibilities:

- a) To report all incidents and injuries;
- b) To advise their immediate supervisor of any injuries or incidents;
- c) To cooperate with the investigation team.

Health & Safety Committee Responsibilities:

- a) To assist the employer with investigations when requested;
- b) To ensure that recommendations resulting from investigations are acted upon in a timely fashion;

- c) To study statistics of incidents/injuries and make recommendations to the employer.

6.3 Incident/Injuries Reporting

Employees:

All incidents or injuries must be reported immediately. Employees will report these to the First Aid Attendant at that site. Injuries are to be reported prior to seeking medical attention without causing undue risk to the workers well being, meaning that, serious injuries be handled appropriately by seeking medical attention immediately where required and reporting the injury either simultaneously or immediately after receiving medical attention.

First Aid Attendants will ensure that the employee's chain of command is notified of the incident and the severity, including recommendation for investigation if required. Incidents must be treated seriously and the Incident Investigation Report must be completed.

Equipment or Property Damage Reporting:

The director of operations must be promptly notified of serious equipment or property damage. An Incident Investigation Report must be completed (with diagrams) for all serious incidents and forwarded to the director of operations and the district principal of health & safety.

Near Misses:

Incidents that do not result in injury to anyone or damage to equipment or property but have the potential to do so must be reported and investigated. *The Near Miss investigation form can be found on the Health & Safety Website under: "Forms".*

WorkSafeBC Notification:

The Human Resources department must be notified of any medical visits, serious equipment or property damage and of serious near misses. HR will in turn notify WorkSafeBC of the incidents.

6.4 Investigation Process

All incidents should be investigated, although the primary focus should be on serious and major incidents. Minor incidents, however, must not be overlooked; they may signal a trend toward unsafe acts that will eventually cause a serious incident. The investigation of an incident should be proportionate to the loss potential. As the degree of loss potential increases, so will the degree of investigation. Cause(s) must be determined and preventative action taken.

Investigations are to be conducted by the principal or supervisor in charge of the area and/or personnel involved. A member(s) of the Site Based Health & Safety Committee may assist in the investigation.

Investigation Tools:

The following items may be helpful in an investigation:

- a) A complete list of emergency phone numbers and investigation procedures;
- b) Camera;
- c) Clipboard, paper and pencils;
- d) Disposable coveralls;
- e) Flashlights;
- f) High visibility vest;
- g) Large envelopes or plastic bags for preserving evidence;
- h) Measuring device;
- i) Work gloves.

The Incident Investigation Form can be found on the Health & Safety web site under: "Forms".

Investigation Procedure:

The person or team conducting an investigation into an incident should proceed as follows:

- a) Establish and take control of the scene;
- b) Ensure that any injured persons are cared for;
- c) Ensure that no further injury or damage occurs;
- d) Get the big picture of what happened;
- e) Examine equipment/materials involved;
- f) Collect and safeguard any physical evidence. Where practicable, the scene of any incident should be left untouched, except for activity necessitated by rescue work or to prevent further failures or injuries until the incident has been investigated;
- g) Take photographs of the scene;
- h) Interview people involved and obtain written statements where appropriate;
- i) Analyze all the available information to determine the causes;
- j) Look for causes where "the system failed the worker", not only for those where "the worker failed the system";
- k) Determine what corrective action will prevent recurrence, and complete the report.

Note: *Incident Investigations are NOT conducted to fix blame. They are conducted to prevent recurrence.*

Incident Flow chart:

A flow chart for incident reporting and investigation can be found on page 4.

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