

## Accident & Incident Investigations

### How You Can Get Something Positive Out Of Accidents And Near Misses

Workplace accidents and near misses can show you the gaps in your safety programs, procedures, and practices. You can then see what is needed to correct safety problems and improve safety performance. One of the best ways to understand accidents, correct safety problems, and prevent accidents is to thoroughly investigate incidents. In a successful accident investigation, assemble the evidence, interview witnesses and all those involved. Analyze the information to understand why the accident happened and what is needed to help prevent a recurrence.

**Employees play an important role in investigations.** This is how your employees can help in an accident investigation.

- **Report all accidents and near misses right away.** Even if no one was hurt, your supervisor needs to know what happened so steps can be taken to prevent future problems.
- **If you witness an accident, try to remember what happened.** Write down what you saw as soon after the accident as possible—what, where, when, who, and why.
- **Don't disturb the scene of the accident.** You could destroy valuable evidence that could help investigators figure out exactly how the accident happened.
- **Provide any information you have about an accident.** Come forward right away and tell what you know. Your cooperation is essential to the success of the investigation.
- **Lend your expertise to the investigation.** If you have special knowledge about the equipment or procedures involved, the circumstances surrounding the accident, etc., tell what you know and offer your suggestions.
- **Encourage co-workers to cooperate in accident investigations.** Remind them that the purpose of an accident investigation is to prevent future accidents—accidents that could involve any one of them.
- **Join with co-workers to implement any corrective measures that come out of an investigation.** Be sure to follow any new safety rules that result from an accident investigation.

**Accident reports play a crucial role in preventing future incidents.** Accident reports explain causes and recommend solutions. Include at least the following information:

➤ Employee(s) involved	➤ Description of the incident
➤ All injured employees	➤ Unsafe condition(s) and unsafe act(s)
➤ Date	➤ Actions taken to prevent similar accidents
➤ Time	➤ Recommendations for additional action
➤ Location	➤ Supervisor(s) or manager(s) doing the investigating
➤ Witnesses	➤ Supervisor or manager responsible for writing the report
➤ Activities and job tasks involved	➤ Date report written and submitted
➤ Nature and extent of any injuries	
➤ Hospital or doctor treating victims	

Reports should be written in plain, direct language with clear meaning. Descriptions and explanations should be brief, to the point, and contain sufficient detail to be clearly understood.