

PROCEDURES FOR ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS

Accidents must be investigated to an appropriate degree. As a result we have two levels of investigations, a formal and a routine investigation.

1. FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS

a. Formal investigations are conducted for serious accidents. Both Safety and the Department involved are participants in the investigation. The following incidents are the ones normally investigated in a formal investigation:

- i. Lost time accidents (Lost time is missing the next tour of duty/work day.)
- ii. Serious accidents or near misses without lost time such as explosions, fires, chemical spills, and electrical accidents

b. Once an accident is reported, a decision on the need to conduct a formal investigation is immediately made by Department Director and EHS. If either determines that a formal investigation is necessary, it will be held. The following steps should be taken:

- i. Scene is secured
- ii. Preliminary scene visit is made and information and evidence is gathered
- iii. List of people to be interviewed is developed and interviews are conducted
- iv. Accident Investigation Report and Action Plan is developed by Department and EHS and routed to Department Executive Directors or Deans for approval and guidance on implementation.

2. ROUTINE INVESTIGATIONS BY SUPERVISORS

a. Since the supervisor is the person charged with preventing accidents in his/her work group, that person should be actively involved in determining the causes and acting to correct the causes of accidents. As such the supervisor is the proper person to investigate the following types of accidents:

- i. Accidents which cause visit to the doctor with no lost time
- ii. Near misses that disrupt productivity but do not have potential for serious injury

b. The supervisor's first duty is to assist the injured with obtaining medical attention. Supervisors are required to accompany the person to the physician if possible to explain to the physician the employee's job duties to allow proper determination as to the return to work restrictions. After this, the supervisor carries out the following steps:

- i. The supervisor conducts an accident investigation as soon after the accident as practicable. Participation by Environmental Health and Safety is not required, but an EHS representative is available to assist and participate if requested. EHS will look into all reported accidents and may request assistance or information from the supervisor as well as others who were involved or may have information helpful to the investigation.
- ii. The supervisor must complete an Action Plan and submit it to his/her supervisor, with a copy to the EHS section. Even though the investigation is informal, the action plan must include "who, what, where and when" as these terms relate to the planned action.

3. THE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

Conducting the accident or incident investigation should follow an agenda which serves to assure that all causes are uncovered. Generally, the inquiry should follow the plan outlined below:

- a. Obtain background information on the job, the circumstances, work assignment, etc
- b. Establish events and job steps leading up to the accident (Job Safety Analysis to be performed as recommended by EHS)
- c. Determine root causes of the accident
- d. Develop an Action Plan for prevention of recurrence:
 - i. What action is to be taken (include what, how, where)
 - ii. Who is responsible to do this on each element
 - iii. When will each step be completed

iv. Arrangements to follow up and assure the action is taken (quality control)

4. APPROVAL PROCESS AND ROUTING

a. The action plan should be reviewed by the department director or dean for approval.

Accidents involving lost time should be reviewed by the Accident Review Committee* for consistency and effectiveness in enforcement and corrective action. Other serious consequence incidents will also be reviewed.

b. If disciplinary action is appropriate, Human Resources Management (HRM) should be consulted for guidance.

c. The accident investigation should be routed to the EHS office. A copy should be filed in the department of origin.

5. COMPLETING ITEMS IN THE ACTION PLAN

a. Departments are to complete action items and report completion to EHS on routine investigations.

b. On formal investigations, EHS will track the action plan to completion with the cooperation of the department involved.

*the Accident Review Committee consists of representatives of HRM, EHS, Risk Management, and the department director/dean. This review is performed prior to disciplinary action being taken. The Director, EHS coordinates the review process.