



Incident Investigation – Guidance Notes

Introduction

The following are guidelines only and not everything may be applicable for any given incident. The more serious the incident, the greater the depth of the investigation. The main purpose of the investigation is to find all that can be learned to enable similar incidents / near misses to be prevented in the future. The information gathered from the investigation will be used to improve the management of health and safety within the company.

1 - Obtain General Information

- Preserve scene by employing the use of barriers and restricting access
- Has anything been altered or moved since the incident / near miss
- Names of injured / ill employees / witnesses / people first on the scene
- Extent of injury / damage / disruption
- The condition of any equipment
- Any chemicals / substances in use or present
- The task that was being undertaken at the time of the accident / near miss
- The time, place and layout of the area
- The environmental conditions, including lighting, ventilation, slippery surfaces, obstruction, weather conditions if outside etc.
- Record conditions and take photographs or make sketches if possible

2 - Obtain Witness Statements

- Name, contact details, occupation of witnesses
- What did they observe and what did they do

3 - Establish Circumstances

- What was being done at the time and what happened
- What were the events leading up to the accident
- What was the accepted method for carrying out the task? Was it being followed? Was it adequate?
- Was the individual competent to carry out the task (Take in to considerations qualifications and experience)
- What instruction and training was given (training records available?)
- Were they aware of the risk assessment for the task? (How they could be harmed and the measures they should take to prevent harm)
- Had the individuals been told to carry out the task, or were they acting on their own initiative
- Has something similar happened previously?

4 - Immediate Response To Incident / Near Miss

- Was prompt and appropriate action taken (fire fighting, first aid, area made safe, access restricted, electrically isolated, warning notices displayed, and referral to occupational health)?

5 - Identify Preventative Measures

- Was there an up to date risk assessment carried out for the task
- Review the risk assessment for the task



- What safety precautions were in place and what safety precautions should have been in place?
- Was instruction and training appropriate to the task

6 - Identify Underlying Causes

- Was supervision and training adequate
- Was equipment suitable for the task
- Was equipment maintained and tested adequately?
- What pressures / constraints, if any, were being applied?
- Was communication adequate between relevant parties?

7 - Actions To Prevent Recurrence

- Could the outcome have been more serious?
- What needs to be done to prevent similar incidents / Near Misses?
- Were safety precautions adequate?
- Actions to prevent recurrence include :
- Better guarding
- Better test and maintenance schedule
- Revision of work methods
- Provision and use of PPE
- Improved supervision , training, inspection, instruction and information
- Better Communication
- Review similar activities elsewhere

The risk assessment process must be completed before any remedial action is undertaken to ensure that the proposed solution mitigates the risk of further occurrences.

Common Causes Of Accidents

	Immediate Causes	Underlying Causes
Premises	Access / egress, housekeeping, layout, floor conditions, obstructions, lighting	Design, suitability of workplace, repair/ maintenance, cleaning
Plant & Substances	Machine guarding, condition of tools, hazardous substances, ventilation	Design, selection, commissioning, maintenance, PPE, storage and use of hazardous substances, risk assessments, COSHH assessments
Procedures	Safe systems of work, instructions issued – clarity and adequacy, supervision, safe movement of material or substances, PPE – selection and use	Planning, risk assessment, preparation of safe system of work, information and instructions – preparation and communication, emergency procedures, supervision, contractors – competence and selection, monitoring arrangements
People	Competence, training, health, under influence of alcohol / drugs – prescribed / non-prescribed	Selection / placement, induction or refresher training cover for absence, safety culture.

All incidents need to be investigated and reported promptly, so that facts can be established before memories fade. Dealing with accidents should be given a high priority. Accident reports should be completed and returned within 5 days



RIDDOR reportable incidents must be reported to 0845 300 9923 (Incident Contact Centre) or online at www.hse.gov.uk/riddor.

RIDDOR reportable incidents include - but are not limited to:

- Fractures - other than fingers, thumbs, toes
- Amputations,
- Dislocations of shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- Loss of site, chemical or hot metal burns to the eyes
- Injury resulting to electrical shock / burn
- Any injury leading to unconsciousness, resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

Dangerous occurrences:

- Collapse, overturning or failure of load bearing parts of lifts and lifting machinery
- Explosion, collapse or bursting of any closed vessel or associated pipework
- Plant or Equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines
- Electrical short circuit or overload causing fire or explosion.

For a complete list see "Guide to Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995".