

# What is Accident Investigation?

The purpose of an accident investigation is to learn from the incident and prevent a repeat occurrence. The purpose is not to find fault or place blame. An accident investigation helps determine the root causes so you can take proper corrective actions to prevent future incidents.

## What Type of Accidents Should Be Investigated?

It is important to investigate all accidents, not just severe ones. Minor accidents and near misses (when no injury occurs) may be part of a pattern that could lead to a more severe injury. Knowing the factors which contribute to all injuries will help identify issues so proper corrective actions can be put into place and lower your workplace incident rates.

## Who Should Investigate?

An accident investigation is the responsibility and concern of managers at all levels; however, the direct supervisor works with the injured employee daily, making them well suited for this task. The supervisor is most familiar with the workflow, equipment and tools used. Further, an employee is most comfortable with their supervisor.

## How To Investigate An Accident?

An investigation should be done as soon as possible following an injury while facts are still fresh with all involved. In addition to the injured employee, question each witness to gather the facts surrounding the incident. Use the Accident Investigation form to determine what actions may have contributed to a workplace injury. Also, keep the following points in mind as you complete the form:

### Promptness

Acting promptly shows concern for the injured employee. It also prevents critical details from fading from witnesses, the injured worker and even the accident scene.

### Thoroughness

Adopt a systematic procedure to obtain all facts and prevent premature assumptions regarding how an injury happened. The process should include on-site/scene investigation, photo documentation, employee and witness interviews, as well as creating the report and following up on the corrective action plan(s) identified.

### Practical Results

Establish corrective action recommendations for every accident investigation. The supervisor and the safety committee should consider the recommendations and implement the actions to prevent recurrences.

