

RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Accident Investigation

Introduction - Why Investigate?

Accidents (including cases of ill health) may be investigated for a variety of reasons

- ◆ to enable statutory report forms (F2508(revised)), to be completed
- ◆ to provide information for insurers in the event of a claim
- ◆ to allow accident statistics to be produced

but the fundamental objective is the identification of the CAUSE of the incident. A further objective, once the cause has been identified, is the prevention of recurrences.

This note gives advice on the undertaking of the initial investigation.

When to Investigate?

For a variety of reasons it is not possible to investigate all accidents, but some investigation should be made of incidents involving lost time or hospital treatment or where it is believed an insurance claim may be made. It can also be valuable to look at “near-miss” situations where there has been no or very minor injury, but initial assessment indicates deficiencies in control procedures which could have led to much more serious consequences.

Speed of response is of considerable importance particularly when it comes to interviewing the injured person or any witnesses, and inspecting the incident location before the situation changes. To enable a speedy response there should be a clear procedure for the reporting of incidents of which all employees must be aware.

Who Investigates?

Accident investigation is useful in bringing home to supervision their health and safety responsibilities, and first line supervisors should be fully involved in the investigation of any incident in their area, even if the investigation is co-ordinated by a Senior Manager or Safety Specialist.

How to Investigate?

Any investigation should set out to establish facts and not have the establishment of blame as a primary objective. The investigator should

- ◆ Visit and take control of the location and establish or confirm facts with regard to the
 - ◆ exact location of the incident
 - ◆ general environment e.g. lighting, floors, housekeeping
 - ◆ particular plant or machinery concerned
 - ◆ details of injured person (and any other damage)
 - ◆ names of possible witnesses
 - ◆ photographs are extremely useful but failing that simple sketches with measurements will be helpful.
- ◆ Interview Witnesses
 - ◆ Obtain a brief, but focused signed statement of fact including
 - ◆ Name, address and occupation
 - ◆ where were you at the time of the accident
 - ◆ what did / didn't you see
 - ◆ Do not prompt or lead witnesses. Ask open ended questions not requiring a yes/no answer and allow them to respond in their own words, but stick to the point.
 - ◆ Consider obtaining negative statements from those in the area - that is "I have no knowledge of this accident". This will prevent people coming along later and saying they were witnesses.
- ◆ End the statement with 'I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true' and get it signed, witnessed and dated.
- ◆ Investigate the system of work
 - ◆ the personnel involved, their training, age, experience and position
 - ◆ level of supervision
 - ◆ the nature of the work - routine, sporadic or incidental :
 - ◆ situation with regard to personal protective equipment - established rules, issue and use, correct type.
- ◆ Establish the timing and sequence of events.
- ◆ Consider the need for any immediate steps necessary to prevent recurrence.
- ◆ Produce a written report.

Presentation of Information

An example of a basic investigation form suitable for use by a supervisor is attached as APPENDIX. 1. This should contain only factual information. Any confidential information or matters of opinion should be held separately.

APPENDIX 2 contains a list of information which should be readily available in the event of a claim.

For further assistance on this or any other risk control topic please contact the Regional Survey Control Unit through your Royal and SunAlliance Regional Centre or through your insurance adviser

Appendix 1

X Y Z Company Ltd., ACCIDENT REPORT FORM	
Location of Accident: _____ ___ Form No: _____ _____ ---	Signature: _____ Position: _____ _____ Date: _____
Date/Time of Accident: _____ _____ Date reported and to whom: _____ _____ Date of Investigation: _____ _____	CONFIDENTIAL COMMENTS
Injured PersonName: _____ _____ Address: _____ _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____ Nature of injury/disease: _____ _____	<i>This section should be used to enter matters of opinion e.g.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doubts as to witness veracity - comment on any possible breaches of Company rules or procedures - recommendations as to any further action necessary to prevent similar incidents - action taken by more senior management following review of the report form
Witnesses Names: _____ _____ Addresses: _____ _____ _____	

Appendix 1

<p>-----</p>	
<p>If machinery involved:</p> <p>Name/Type of machine: -----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Identity number: -----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Part causing injury: -----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Signature: -----</p> <p>Date: -----</p>
<p>What happened:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Action reviewed - State further action taken:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>Action taken to prevent recurrence: -----</p>	<p>Signature: ----- Position: -----</p> <p>Date: -----</p>

Appendix 2

The following is a non-exhaustive, list of documents which may be material to liability claims for accidents in the workplace.

Courts are likely to order these documents to be disclosed, either prior to or during proceedings.

However, it is important that they are readily available whether proceedings are issued or not.

Accident Reports

- ◆ Internal accident report form.
- ◆ Photographs
- ◆ Written witness statements, signed and dated.
- ◆ Photostat entries of Accident Book/First Aid
- ◆ RIDDOR Accident Reports

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992

- ◆ Pre-accident risk assessment
- ◆ Health surveillance records
- ◆ Documents relating to employees' health and safety training

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

- ◆ Repair, maintenance and housekeeping records

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

- ◆ Manufacturers' specifications and instructions
- ◆ Maintenance log/records
- ◆ Documents providing information and instructions to employees
- ◆ Documents provided to employees on training for use of equipment
- ◆ Any notice, sign or document dealing with controls and control systems
- ◆ Instruction/training documents issued dealing with maintenance operations
- ◆ Copies of markings and warnings

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

- ◆ Documents relating to the assessment of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ◆ Documents relating to the maintenance and replacement of PPE
- ◆ Record of maintenance procedures for PPE
- ◆ Records of tests and examinations of PPE
- ◆ Documents providing information, instruction and training in relation to PPE
- ◆ Instructions for use of PPE to include the manufacturers' instructions

Appendix 2

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

- ◆ Manual handling risk assessment
- ◆ Documents showing the information provided to the employee to give:
 - ◆ general indications related to the load;
 - ◆ precise indications on the weight of the load and the heaviest side of the load if the centre of gravity was not positioned centrally
- ◆ Documents relating to training in respect of manual handling operations and training records

Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

- ◆ Analysis of work stations to assess and reduce risks carried out
- ◆ Documents detailing the provision of training including training records
- ◆ Documents providing information to employees

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994

- ◆ Risk assessment and reviewed risk assessment
- ◆ Copy labels from containers used for storage handling and disposal of carcinogenics
- ◆ Warning signs identifying designation of areas and installations which may be contaminated by carcinogenics
- ◆ Air monitoring records for substances assigned a maximum exposure limit or occupational exposure standard
- ◆ Maintenance, examination and test of control measures records
- ◆ Monitoring records
- ◆ Health surveillance records
- ◆ Documents detailing information, instruction and training including training records for employees
- ◆ Labels and health and safety data sheets supplied to the employers

- ◆ See list of disclosures for the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994

- ◆ Notification of a project form (HSE F10)
- ◆ Health and safety plan
- ◆ Health and safety file
- ◆ Information and training records provided
- ◆ Records of advice from and view of persons at work

Lifting Plant and Equipment (Records of Test and Examination etc.) Regulations 1992

- ◆ Records kept

The Noise at Work Regulations 1989

- ◆ Any risk assessment records
- ◆ Manufacturers' literature in respect of all ear protection made available to claimant
- ◆ All documents provided to the employee for the provision of information

Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989

- ◆ Pre-accident assessment of head protection

Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996

- ◆ Reports prepared following inspections and examinations of working platforms, excavations etc.
- ◆ Report prepared following inspections and examinations of work in cofferdams and caissons

Further Information

Further information obtained from *HSE Books, Tel 01787 88116*