

Incident Investigation

Investigation for prevention:

Injuries must be thoroughly understood in an effort to prevent repeat occurrences. Incident investigations are so important that both management and the Safety Committee must be involved. The investigation pinpoints the causes of an incident and also provides an accurate analysis of the steps that must be taken to prevent a recurrence. After the investigation, all missing safeguards or corrective measures must be put into place.

An Investigation Team must be established and prepared before an incident happens, so that it will be ready to respond when the need occurs. Investigation Team members will change periodically, but the ideal team will include the following:

- A worker from the area where the incident occurred.
- A supervisor from a work area not involved in the incident.
- A maintenance supervisor who understands equipment or processes associated with the incident.
- The Safety Supervisor.
- A Safety Committee representative.

There are five steps to an effective incident investigation:

- **Gather information:** The Investigation Team learns the facts about the incident and interviews witnesses and others involved. The Incident Investigation Form is used to document the facts and organize the information.
- **Analyze facts:** The Investigation Team identifies the incident's causes and contributing factors and determines how the incident could have been prevented.
- **Report findings:** The Investigation Team prepares a written report that describes who was involved, where the incident occurred, when it happened, and what caused it. The report recommends what can be done to prevent the incident from happening again.
- **Act on recommendations:** Management reviews the report and determines how to prevent the incident from happening again. A modification to a Safety policy, procedure, or program needs to be developed and implemented to prevent future recurrences. This assures proper corrective action is taken.
- **Follow up:** The Safety Supervisor, Safety Committee and Investigation Team follows up to ensure that appropriate corrective action was taken to prevent the incident from happening again.

