

Investigations

Important Definitions

Accident:

- Not defined in legislation
- An unwanted, unplanned event that results in a loss (production, property or human) – *SASWH SMS Standards 2012*

Dangerous Occurrence:

- Defined in Saskatchewan's *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 1996*, section 9
- Basically, any incident that could have injured, hospitalized or caused the death of a worker, but didn't

Incident:

- Not defined in legislation
- An unwanted, unplanned event that results in or could have resulted in a loss (production, property or human) – *SASWH SMS Standards 2012*
- Often also refers to a near miss

Investigation Team

The team may include employees and/or supervisors with knowledge of the work performed, peers who follow best-practices, TLR trainer, occupational health committee member(s), union representative(s), safety professional(s) or consultant(s), external expert(s) and also consider consultations with manufacturers.

Investigation Technique - C.A.R.T.

C.A.R.T. is one process to assist you in **C**ollecting and **A**nalyzing information, **R**eporting and documenting your findings and **T**ake action.

Step 1: COLLECT THE EVIDENCE

Physical: immediate physical surroundings, equipment, debris, broken or missing parts, damage to equipment or tools, chemical or biological substances involved, environment (change in temperature or lighting), personal protective equipment (PPE)

Documents: review the following; training records, equipment manuals, maintenance records, work process/procedures, policies, material safety data sheets (MSDS), relevant legislation

Witnesses: interview immediately in a quiet place, who saw the incident, who was first on the scene, specialists (familiar with the equipment, technology or work practices), workers and supervisors

Step 2: ANALYZE THE EVIDENCE - analyze the facts to determine:

Direct causes: what directly led to the incident, un-safe acts or conditions

Indirect causes: identify other contributing factors that set the stage for the incident; was training/supervision adequate, proper tools available, procedure available to reference

Root causes: underlying factors that lead up to the incident; often there are many factors, such as policies/procedures, plans, training, orientation, equipment design/compatibility, work environment, safety management systems. LOOK FOR GAPS. Experience suggests the root cause usually involves a gap in the safety management system.

Step 3: REPORT & DOCUMENT

What happened and why: use clear, simple to understand language

What will you do about it: explain short and long term corrective actions with timelines

Assign responsibility: who is accountable for action, timelines, monitoring, and follow-up

Report: send a copy of the report to the OHC, manager/supervisor and employer

Communicate: inform employees, supervisors and managers of recommendations and corrective actions to be taken

Step 4: TAKE ACTION

The employer is responsible for acting on recommendations in the report and the OHC monitors the progress of these actions

Safety of others: your action must not compromise the health and safety of others

Address recommendations in writing: indicate what will be done and include timelines

Monitor: to ensure corrective action is completed

Communicate: provide updates to all employees

Follow Up: ensure that corrective action has been completed and is effective

Reoccurring Incidents – why do they keep happening?

- investigations are not done
- causes (direct, in-direct and root) are not fully considered
- employees are not informed about the causes and the corrective actions
- corrective actions are not implemented, monitored or followed up on

Why Should I Investigate?

- Prevent future occurrences by identifying and controlling hazards
- Provide information for developing safe work practices
- Reduce injuries and lost time in your workplace
- Promote a safe and healthy workplace culture
- **Demonstrate that you value all employees by making *workplace health and safety a priority for all***

sources: *Incident Investigation: A Guide for Committees and Representatives*; OHC Training Level II Workbook, Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, Occupational Health and Safety Division | *OSH Answers: Health and Safety Programs: Accident Investigation*, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!