

TOOLBOX TALK #3

CONDUCTING AN INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Your company has just experienced an incident resulting in an unintentional injury to a worker. Now what? Reacting quickly to the incident with a prescribed procedure and actions can demonstrate your company's commitment to safety and ensure the proper information is collected to fulfill an incident investigation's ultimate purpose – to prevent future incidents.

Steps in an Investigation Process

The investigation process should begin after arranging for first aid or medical treatment for the injured person(s). In getting started, remind everyone involved – especially workers – the investigation is to learn and prevent, not find fault. Steps of the investigation process include:

1. Call or gather the necessary person(s) to conduct the investigation and obtain the investigation kit.
2. Secure the area where the injury occurred and preserve the work area as it is.
3. Identify and gather witnesses to the injury event.
4. Interview the involved worker.
5. Interview all witnesses.
6. Document the scene of the injury through photos or videos.
7. Complete the investigation report, including determination of what caused the incident and what corrective actions will prevent recurrences.
8. Use results to improve the injury and illness prevention program to better identify and control hazards before they result in incidents.
9. Ensure follow-up on completion of corrective actions.

What to Include in the Documented Investigation Process

As with many processes, preparation and documentation are crucial. As part of the injury and illness prevention program, the investigation procedure should detail:

- Who should conduct and participate in the investigation
- Incidents to be investigated
- Information to be collected
- Identification of causal factors (often referred to as root causes)
- Determination of corrective actions
- Tracking completion of corrective actions



Who is involved? - Normally, the investigation is conducted by the injured worker's immediate supervisor. However, assistance can also be provided by the safety practitioner, or team members from an investigative or review committee or safety committee if such teams exist. In cases involving a fatality, senior management personnel, engineering staff or legal counsel may also be involved. Those participating in the investigation would include the injured worker, witnesses to the incident or events preceding it, and the injured worker's immediate supervisor if some other person is conducting the investigation. The injured employee may also request the presence of an employee representative during the interview if contractual agreements are in place.