

Guide to Performing an Incident Investigation

WHY INVESTIGATE?

- Determine the contributing factors and root causes of an injury or illness
- Prevent similar occurrences
- Not to find fault or lay blame
- Improve health and safety at the College

KEY ACTIVITIES IN AN INCIDENT INVESTIGATION:

Once the injured person gets any necessary medical attention and the incident scene is secured so there is no risk of further injury, the next focus is the investigation. Conduct the investigation in a co-operative manner and keep an open mind.

1. Survey the incident scene. Make a list of people who were present at the time of the incident and get their contact information. Make drawings of the layout of the area; take measurements and photos of the scene.
2. Interview the injured party and anyone else who has information relevant to the investigation. Verify your understanding and recording of the incident with the person who is being interviewed. It is recommended that each witness review, sign and date their statement.
3. Examine the site of the incident in detail. If there was a fatality or critical injury, you must ensure the scene is not disturbed before Ministry of Labour and/or police investigators have done their jobs. Look for equipment damage. Take note of environmental details: noise level, visibility, temperature and exposure to hazardous materials.
4. Organize the facts and analyze the information. Ask the questions: **who, what, when, why** and **how** to see if any information is missing.
5. Complete the Incident Report Form OHS-006(A) including sufficient detail so that the events leading up to the accident are understood. The report should identify all the causes of the incident including underlying causes.
6. Take corrective action; notify injured person and other staff affected by the incident about the actions taken.
7. Follow up. Be persistent to ensure that corrective measures are being implemented.

INTERVIEW TIPS:

- Keep questions simple and to the point
- Interview witness alone
- Interview as soon as possible while details are fresh in their minds
- Explain the reason for the investigation
- Keep it relaxed
- Don't speculate; allow them to explain in their own words
- Don't ask "yes/no" questions
- Avoid interruptions
- Take detailed notes
- Thank them for their help

NOTE: An incident investigation **tool kit** is available from the H&S Coordinator (3H20). It includes a camera, tape measure, barrier tape, PPE, flashlight and other tools to carry out an effective incident investigation