

How Should an Accident Investigation Proceed?

1. Provide emergency response.

- First aid on the scene
- 911 response
- Physicians panel

(Do not question an employee if doing so delays medical treatment)

(Do not question an employee who is extremely upset or in pain)

2. Secure the area

- Isolate the accident scene (rope, tape, guard, etc.
- Lock out any machine that might have been involved
- Do whatever it takes to prevent another occurrence while preserving all evidence for the investigation

3. Identify potential witnesses

- Make a list of everyone that was involved or might have witnessed the event
- Look for all types of witnesses
 - Eye witnesses
 - Ear witnesses
 - And others who might have any information

4. Have the necessary investigative tools available

Could include:

- Camera and film
- Video camcorder
- Tape recorder
- Measuring devices
- Sample containers
- Interview and investigation forms
- Flashlight
- Barricade markers
- Tape
- Tags
- Padlocks

5. Procure hard evidence and record data

- After documenting the scene as it was found, collect, tag, record, and/or photograph all evidence that can or may be used for your investigation, such as machine parts, tools, or equipment.
- Use appropriate forms (investigation reports)

6. Conduct interviews

- Ask interviewees to provide as much clear and specific information as possible
- Use open-ended questions that cannot be answered with just a "yes" or "no". Example: "Describe the sound".
- Thank employees for their cooperation

7. Review data
 - Look at:
 - Inspection reports
 - Maintenance reports
 - Prior incident reports
 - Identify any patterns or trends (frequency, departmental, processes, certain employees, etc.)
8. Prepare an investigation report
 - Record key facts
 - Carelessness is NEVER an accident cause
9. Implement the corrective action
 - Critical to the prevention of future accidents
 - No corrective actions taken sends a negative message to the workforce
10. Follow up
 - Make sure that recommended corrective actions are taken
 - Monitor corrective actions for their adequacy and effectiveness
 - Talk to workers involved to assure that necessary training was received and that the corrective actions work
 - Are similar accidents still occurring?
 - Is supervision adequate?