



Safety Training Topics

January 2023 – Accident Reporting

Accident Investigations

OSHA Recordkeeping

OSHA Reporting

Reporting Incidents

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

Accident Investigations

Accidents can be defined as unplanned events that result in personal injury or property damage. By this definition, a worker who slips on a scaffold, but catches himself before falling, did not have an accident. Although there was no injury as a result of this incident, a means of reporting and investigating these near misses, as well as accidents, should be established. By investigating both near-misses and accidents we can do a better job of eliminating or controlling hazards.

Unsafe acts and unsafe conditions cause 98% of all accidents and near-misses. Of that number, 88-90% of the accidents result from unsafe acts, with unsafe conditions making up the other 10 %. Less than 2% of accidents go unexplained or are called "Acts of God." Unsafe acts are often identified by their immediate cause. Carelessness, poor judgment and bad attitudes are all examples of unsafe acts.

In an investigation we must look beyond the immediate cause to determine what underlying causes may have been involved. Poor training, lack of supervision and inadequate maintenance may all be contributors to accidents. Unsafe conditions in the work place may also be at fault. An oil spill may be the immediate cause of a fall. Poorly maintained equipment may have caused the spill and would thus be an underlying cause. A thorough accident investigation should reveal both.

Many accidents are caused by assigning workers to jobs that are too difficult to perform. If you don't have the skills or training to do a job, let your supervisor know. Performing a job that you know is beyond your ability is simply poor judgment, otherwise known as an unsafe act.

THE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Accidents may be investigated by an individual or team. In either case, it should be reviewed and used as a learning experience. Both management and workers should review the results of investigations and be free to make comments. While a report might indicate names of people involved, results used for discussion and training should not include these names. The intent of an investigation report should be to find solutions, not cast blame.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES USUALLY CONSIST OF 5 STEPS:

1. Collect the facts. (Use interviews and inspections.)
2. Determine the causes-both immediate and underlying.
3. Recommend actions to prevent future occurrences.
4. Communicate the results of the investigation.
5. Verify that recommendations are implemented.

Facts must be collected immediately. Don't change anything at the scene. Whenever possible, the injured worker(s) will be interviewed first and witnesses second. In most cases, interviews should be conducted separately to avoid confusion and omissions; witnesses may be influenced by what they hear from others. If you are interviewed, try to relax. If necessary, ask to go to surroundings that are more comfortable. Stick to the facts. Tell the interviewer what you saw, not what you think he wants to hear.

Following the interviews, the equipment and work areas should be inspected. If you have any knowledge or records which would be pertinent, such as maintenance records or written procedures, provide them to the inspector. When the results are posted, if you feel that certain causes weren't identified, be sure to let your supervisor know. Be sure to follow any new policies which are developed as a result of the investigation.

REVIEW QUESTION

What are the leading causes for all accidents?

ANSWER

Unsafe acts cause 90% of all accidents.

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

OSHA Recordkeeping

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 requires certain employers to prepare and maintain records of work-related injuries and illnesses. Separate records must be kept for each establishment or site that is expected to be in operation for one year or longer. Some employers are partially exempt from these requirements because of their size or the industry classification of the business.

Employers must decide if a case is recordable within 7 calendar days after they have been notified that an incident has occurred. Employers must also determine whether the incident is a new case or a recurrence of an existing one, and if the case was work-related. Flowcharts and other documents have been prepared by OSHA to assist your employer in the decision making process.

Specific forms have been developed and must be used to record work-related injury and illness information. If the case is recordable, your employer must first complete the Injury and Illness Incident Report form (OSHA 301). Some state workers compensation, insurance, or other reports may be acceptable substitutes, as long as they provide the same information as the OSHA 301.

The Log of Work Related Injuries and Illnesses (Form 300) is used to classify work-related injuries and illnesses and to note the extent and severity of each case. When an incident occurs, your employer should use the log to record specific details about what happened and how it occurred.

A separate form, The Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses (Form 300A) tracks the total incidents for the year in each category. The Summary must be posted in a visible location from February 1 to April 30. A "Company Executive" must examine and sign the summary certifying the accuracy of the information. All workers are encouraged to review the Summary and be aware of the types of injuries that are occurring in the workplace.

What is a work-related incident?

An injury or illness is considered work-related if an event or exposure in the work environment caused or contributed to the condition or significantly aggravated a preexisting condition. Work-relatedness is presumed for incidents resulting from events or exposures occurring in the workplace, unless an exception specifically applies. The work environment includes the establishment and other locations where one or more employees are working or are present as a condition of their employment.

What incidents get recorded?

Employers must record all work-related injuries and illnesses that result in:

- Death
- A loss of consciousness
- Days away from work
- Restricted work activity or job transfer
- Medical treatment beyond first aid

Your employer must also record any work-related case involving cancer, a chronic, irreversible disease, a fractured or cracked bone or a punctured eardrum. An additional recording criterion includes:

- Any needle-stick injury or cut by a sharp object that is contaminated with a potentially infectious material;
- Any case requiring an employee to be medically removed under the requirements of an OSHA health standard;
- Cases of tuberculosis infection as evidenced by a positive skin test or diagnosis by a physician or other licensed health care professional after exposure to a known case of active tuberculosis.

Workers have the right to review the injury and illness records. However, under certain conditions information will not be provided on the forms to protect the "privacy concerns" of affected workers. A separate report containing the omitted information must be kept by your employer and provided to OSHA upon request. Workers should also be aware that cases listed on the forms are not necessarily eligible for workers' compensation or other insurance benefits. Listing a case does not mean that the employer or worker was at fault or that an OSHA standard was violated.

QUESTION

What are the posting requirements of the recordkeeping regulation?

ANSWER

The Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses (Form 300A) must be posted in a visible location from February 1 to April 30. A "Company Executive" must examine and sign the summary certifying the accuracy of the information.

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

OSHA Reporting

Unfortunately there are times when work-related incidents result in the death or hospitalization of workers. OSHA has established criteria for the immediate reporting of these catastrophic events. OSHA will investigate these incidents to ensure the safety of the existing workforce.

Your employer must report to OSHA, within eight hours, the death of a worker or the in-patient hospitalization of three or more employees. The report must be made orally by telephone, or in person, to the nearest OSHA Area Office. If an OSHA representative cannot be reached at the area office the report can be called into the OSHA Central Telephone Number (1-800-321-OSHA). The report must still be given to a person and not through an answering machine, e-mail or fax.

At the time the report is given, OSHA will need to know the following:

- Establishment name
- Location of the incident
- Time of the incident
- Number of fatalities or hospitalized employees
- Names of any injured employees
- Contact person and his or her phone number
- Brief description of the incident

Even work-related heart attacks need to be reported. In these cases the OSHA Area Director will decide whether to investigate the incident, depending on the circumstances of the heart attack. Some fatalities and multiple hospitalizations do not need to be reported. Motor vehicle accidents that occur on a public street or highway and not in a construction work zone do have to be reported. Incidents that occur on commercial airplanes, trains, subways or buses also need not be reported. However, these injuries must be recorded on the OSHA injury and illness records, if the employer is required to keep such records.

There are times when a fatality or hospitalization occurs long after the incident. Your employer is only required to report fatalities or multiple hospitalizations that occur within thirty (30) days of an incident. If your employer did not learn of a reportable incident at the time it occurred and the incident would otherwise be reportable, the report must be made within eight (8) hours of the time your employer is informed. Your employer depends on the supervisors to immediately report these incidents to management. Workers also play a key role in keeping their Supervisors immediately informed so that action can be taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

Reporting Incidents

If you were involved in a work-related incident, would you know what action to take? All incidents, and even near miss incidents, should be immediately reported to your supervisor. Injury and illness information serves many purposes. It assists management in meeting the requirements established by OSHA. More importantly, the information can be used to identify hazards in the workplace. Once the hazards are identified, corrective action can be taken. Management also uses this information to file worker's compensation claims, identify accident trends and compile reports requested by clients, insurance providers, and government agencies.

Most of the information contained in these reports comes from the affected workers. It is collected by the supervisors and then forwarded to management. Your supervisor depends on you notify him of work-related injuries, illnesses and near misses as soon as they occur. By promptly reporting these incidents to your supervisor you also protect your rights if a workers' compensation claim is filed. Prompt reporting will help establish the injury or illness as work-related. Prompt will also allow your supervisor to take immediate corrective action.

Management understands that some injuries and illness that occur in the workplace are of a private and personal nature. OSHA also recognizes that the "privacy concerns" of workers need to be protected. In "privacy concern cases" the employee's name and other information can be omitted from the reports.

The following types of injuries or illnesses are considered to be privacy concern cases:

- An injury or illness to an intimate body part or to the reproductive system,
- An injury or illness resulting from a sexual assault,
- A mental illness,
- A case of HIV infection, hepatitis, or tuberculosis,
- A needle-stick injury or cut from a sharp object that is contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious material,

Other incidents can be classified as "privacy cases" if the employee independently and voluntarily requests that his or her name not be entered on the log. Our workers can be sure that their rights to privacy will be respected and that all data collected will be used to assist supervisors, management and government agencies create a safer workplace.

QUESTION

Why is it important to promptly report any accident?

ANSWER

By promptly reporting an accident you:

- Help prevent future accidents from occurring
- Assist management in complying with OSHA regulations
- Establish the work relationship if a worker's compensation claim is filed