

Accident/incident guidance

1. Obtain basic facts

- Names of injured/ill employees/witnesses/people first on the scene
- Extent of injury/ill health/damage/disruption
- The task that was being undertaken at the time of the accident/incident
- The time, place and layout of area (building, room)
- The environmental conditions (lighting, ventilation, slippery, obstructions, weather conditions if outside)
- Record conditions e.g. take photographs or make sketches
- Has anything been altered since the accident/incident?

2. Obtain witness statements

- Name, contact details and occupation of witnesses
- What did they observe and what did they do?

3. Establish circumstances

- What was being done at the time and what happened?
- What was the accepted method for carrying out the task? Was it being followed?
- Was the individual competent to carry out the task (qualifications, experience)?
- What instruction and training had been given (records available)?
- Were all the individuals involved aware of risk assessment for task (how they could be harmed and the measures they should take to prevent harm)?
- Had the individuals been told to carry out the task, or were they acting on their own initiative?
- Has something similar happened at a previous event?

4. Immediate response to accident/incident

- Was prompt and appropriate action taken (e.g. fire fighting, first aid, spillage procedure, area made safe, access restricted, electricity isolated, warning notices placed, referral to Occupational Health)?

5. Identify preventative measures

- Review the risk assessment for the event (assuming in existence)
- What safety precautions were in place and what safety precautions should have been in place?
- What instruction and training was given and what instruction and training should have been given?

6. Identify underlying causes

- Was supervision and training adequate?
- Was equipment suitable for task?
- Was equipment maintained and tested adequately?
- What pressures/constraints, if any, were being applied?
- Was communication adequate between relevant parties?

7. Actions to prevent a recurrence

- Could the outcome have been more serious?
- What needs to be done to prevent similar accident/incident?
- Were the safety precautions adequate but not implemented; why not?

Suggested actions to prevent recurrence include:

- Better guarding or barriers
- More in depth risk assessment
- Better testing and maintenance
- Revised work method
- Provision and use of personal protective equipment
- Improved supervision, training, inspection, instruction and information
- Better communication
- Review similar activities elsewhere