



# Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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## Accident Investigation

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Accidents are unplanned and unexpected events that cause injury, property damage, and/or financial loss in the workplace. Incidents or “near misses” don’t result in loss, but have the potential to do so.

Ideally, safety programs focus on preventing accidents and incidents, but if one occurs, have an accident investigation procedure ready and train your employees how to use it. Investigate ALL accidents and injuries; the severity determines the extent of the investigation. Handled properly, accident investigation helps you look at problems, solve them, improve your safety programs, and prevent future accidents.

Accidents are the result of unsafe acts or unsafe conditions, or both. Whatever the reasons, we want to eliminate them to keep you safe, and you can help!

**Unsafe conditions** - (10%) are physical hazards such as missing machine/protective guards, exposed electrical circuits, damaged equipment, slippery floors, improper storage of material, lack of supervision, and inadequate training.

**Unsafe Acts** - (90%) are the things people do that are obviously just not safe.

### Some examples are:

- Horseplay;
- Not using PPE;
- Running;
- Using damaged tools;
- Not lifting properly; and
- Violating safety rules.

Accidents can result in injury or death to you or another employee. That’s why it’s important to immediately report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor.

### Excuses some people use:

- That’s the way I always do it;
- I can take a shortcut because I’m experienced;
- I was just trying to fix it;
- I thought I knew how;
- I was in a hurry;
- Doing it safely takes too much time; or
- I didn’t know it was loaded.



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## Key roles to play in accident-investigation procedures:

1. Always report any accident or near miss immediately so we can review and make needed corrections.
2. Cooperate with all investigations of any accident in which you were involved, which you witnessed, or where your knowledge of the situation or procedure could be helpful.

Remember, when we investigate an accident, we're not looking for someone to blame. We're trying to find out what really happened and what to do to prevent the same thing from happening again. So, your cooperation can really make a difference, even a life-or-death difference to all of us.

## Identifying Hazards:

A good accident investigation is aimed at discovering what happened, what caused it to happen, and why, and how to prevent future occurrences. The investigation tries to identify the hazards that led to the accident and any other related hazards that could lead to accidents in the future.

An accident investigation should take place as quickly as possible after the incident itself. The investigator or investigators approach it like a good detective or investigative journalist, trying to answer these questions:

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- Who was involved?
- How did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- How can we keep it from happening again?

As mentioned, to get complete answers to these questions, it's best to investigate immediately after an accident. Often, more than one factor contributes to an accident, so we want to be thorough and not miss anything that could be important. When there's an accident, the first thing you do, of course, is to make sure that anyone who's injured or ill gets proper medical treatment. If there's something like a spill or leak, it has to be stopped before it spreads. In some cases, we may have to barricade or rope off an accident site to keep people from harm and to preserve the evidence.

In spite of their complexity, most accidents are preventable by eliminating one or more causes. Accident investigations determine not only what happened, but also how and why. The information gained from these investigations can prevent recurrence of similar or perhaps more disastrous accidents. Accident investigators are interested in each event as well as in the sequence of events that led to an accident. The accident type is also important to the investigator. The recurrence of accidents of a particular type or those with common causes shows areas needing special accident prevention emphasis.

**Don't learn safety...by accident!!**



