

Supervisor's Accident Investigations

When an accident occurs in your department, it is an indication that something has gone wrong. Accidents don't just happen, they are caused.

When an accident does occur, it is important that you, the Line Supervisor, investigate the accident to determine the cause and to initiate corrective action to assure that similar type accidents will not occur from the same causes.

The basic cause(s) of virtually any accident are "unsafe acts" and/or "unsafe conditions". Most accidents involve a combination of causes, involving both environmental and behavioristic factors. The chart on the back of this page provides a guide to the proper identification of accident causes and suggested corrective action to eliminate or control them.

When you investigate an accident, keep these things in mind:

- Every accident is caused. Carelessness is not a cause, but the result of some deficiency. Telling employees to be more careful will not eliminate the real accident causes.
- An accident investigation is not a trial to find fault or to place blame. Its purpose is to find accident causes so that corrective measures may be taken to prevent future accidents.
- Most accidents result from a combination of human error and a physical hazard. Do not overlook the possibility of multiple errors and hazards. Find and remove all contributing causes.
- Don't stop at the obvious answer. For example, a missing machine guard does not cause an accident; its function is to help prevent injury if an accident happens. The accident happened because the operator entered the point of operation when the machine guard was removed. Find out why the operator did this, and why the guard was off. Only by correcting both problems can you be reasonably sure of preventing the next accident.
- The accident investigation should be conducted as soon after the accident as possible. Facts should be gathered while the accident is fresh in the minds of those involved. If possible, question every employee who was involved in, or witnessed, the incident.

Once you have determined what causes contributed to the accident, make suitable recommendations for corrective action to prevent recurrences.

Contact your local Great American Loss Prevention Specialist for additional information.

The chart on the back of this page provides a guide to the proper identification of accident causes and suggested corrective action to eliminate or control them.

Environmental Conditions	Definition of Condition	Suggested Corrective Action
Unsafe Procedure	Hazardous process: management failed to make adequate plans for safety.	a. Job safety analysis b. Formulation of safe procedure
Defective Through Use	Buildings, machines, or equipment that have become rough, slippery, sharp edged, worn, cracked, broken or otherwise defective	a. Inspection b. Proper maintenance
Improperly Guarded	Work areas, machines, or equipment that are unguarded or inadequately guarded.	a. Inspection b. Checking plans, blueprints, purchase orders, contracts, and materials for safety c. Include guards in original design, order, and contract d. Provide guards for existing hazards
Defective Through Design	Failure to provide for safety in the design, construction, and installation of buildings, machinery and equipment. Too large, too small, not strong enough.	a. Source of supply must be reliable b. Checking plans, blueprints, purchase orders, contracts, and materials for safety c. Correction of defects
Unsafe Dress or Apparel	Management's failure to provide or specify the use of goggles, respirators, safety shoes, hard hats, and other articles of safe dress or apparel.	a. Provide safe dress or apparel or personal protective equipment. b. Specify the use or non use of certain dress or apparel or protective equipment on certain jobs
Unsafe Housekeeping Facilities	Unsuitable layout, or lack of equipment necessary for good housekeeping—shelves, boxes, bins, aisle markers, etc.	a. Provided suitable layout and equipment necessary for good housekeeping.
Improper Ventilation	Poorly ventilated or not ventilated at all.	a. Improve the ventilation
Improper Illumination	Poorly illuminated or not illuminated at all.	a. Improve the illumination

Behavioristic Conditions	Definition of Condition	Suggested Corrective Action
Lack of Knowledge or Skill	Unaware of safe practice; unpracticed; unskilled: not properly instructed or trained.	a. Job training
Improper Attitude	Worker was properly trained and instructed, but he failed to follow instructions because he was willful, reckless, absentminded, excitable or angry.	a. Supervision b. Discipline c. Personal Work
Physical Deficiencies	Worker has impaired eyesight, or hearing, heart trouble, hernia, etc.	a. Pre-placement physical examinations b. Periodic physical examinations c. Proper placement of employees d. Identification of workers with temporary physical deficiencies

The information presented in this publication is intended to provide guidance and is not intended as a legal interpretation of any federal, state or local laws, rules or regulations applicable to your business. The loss prevention information provided is intended only to assist policyholders in the management of potential loss producing conditions involving their premises and/or operations based on generally accepted safe practices. In providing such information, Great American does not warrant that all potential hazards or conditions have been evaluated or can be controlled. It is not intended as an offer to write insurance for such conditions or exposures. The liability of Great American Insurance Company and its affiliated insurers is limited to the terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies underwritten by any of them.

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