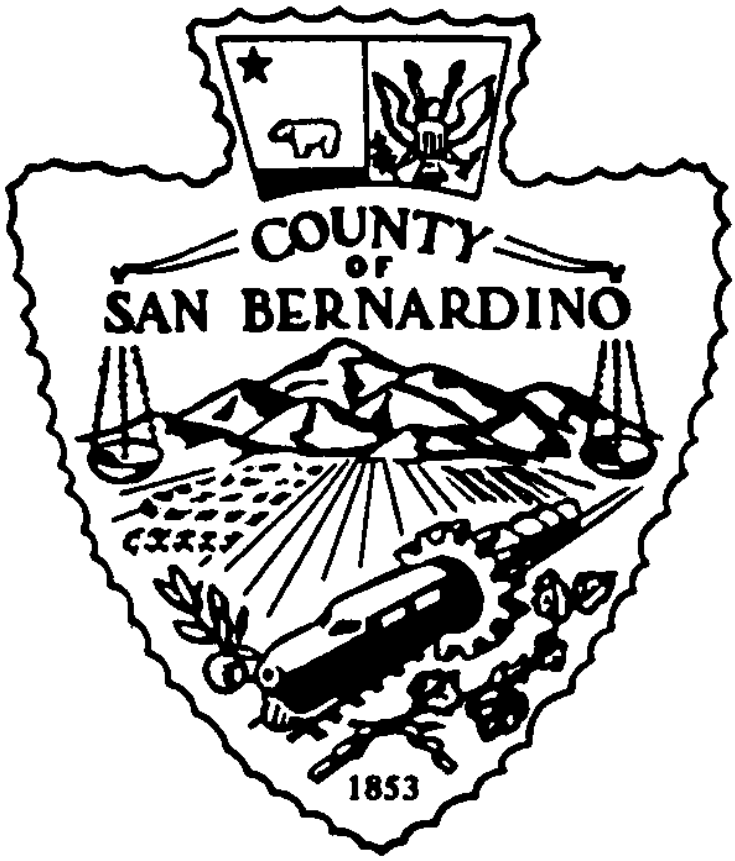
Accident Investigation



ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

SCOPE

This section establishes the County of San Bernardino procedure for Accident Investigation. It provides information and guidance on the process of an investigation which is to be used by County departments in preparing individualized programs. The program identifies documentation, communication, and training necessary to ensure the health and safety of County employees. **This procedure sets forth minimum standards for all County departments**. Individual departments may implement more stringent standards. Copies of department-prepared programs are to be provided to Risk Management Division/Safety Section upon request, as well as included in the immediately following divider labeled "Department Program".

PURPOSE

Title 8, California Code of Regulations, General Industry Safety Orders, Section 3203 requires an investigation and review of investigations of accidents and incidents resulting in occupational injury, occupational illness, or occupational exposure to hazardous substance or agents.

INTRODUCTION

Among the first responses by a supervisor to an accident must be to begin an **Accident Investigation**. Placing priority on learning as much as possible about **why** an accident happened will help **prevent** similar occurrences in the future.

Accident and near miss investigation is a key element in prevention of occupational illness/injury/exposure and are the result of an inappropriate act on the part of an employee. To a lesser extent, work place hazards and unsafe conditions/practices contribute to illness/ injury/exposure incidents.

Accident and near miss investigation on the part of a supervisor will uncover unsafe work practices, work place hazards and unsafe conditions, and identify employee training needs, all of which are essential elements of illness/injury/exposure prevention.

RESPONSIBILITY

Individual supervisors are responsible for conducting an investigation or inquiry into all occupational illness/injury/exposure incidents and "near miss" situations that occur within their area of responsibility.

Individual departments are responsible to assure that supervisors conduct and document investigations, as well as develop a practice whereby investigation reports are reviewed on a regular basis by department management, safety committees and other appropriate individuals.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES

When a person is injured, the supervisor must obtain medical help for the employee, protect other employees from injury if a hazard still exists, and take immediate action to correct an existing hazard. The supervisor shall complete and send to Risk Management the Employer's Report of Occupational Injury or Illness (see page 151 and 152 of the County of San Bernardino Employee Safety and Health Manual or Risk Management Division Reporting Procedures for further instruction). In addition, an Occupational Illness/Injury Investigation Report should be completed. A master copy of this report is included as Page 37 of this program.

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS

1. A determination is to be made as to whether or not the employee was performing assigned duties when the incident occurred.

2. Was the employee trained in the safe method to perform the job?

3. Was the job being performed according to established practices and training?

4. Is training documented?

5. Was a hazardous work place condition either the cause or contributing factor in the incident?

6. An investigation is to be conducted as soon as possible after the incident. In no case is the

investigation to be delayed more than 24 hours.

The process of accident investigation involves three phases: **PHASE I, immediate fact-finding** and **PHASE II,** evaluation and **PHASE III,** identification of cause.

Gathering facts and documenting causes of accidents provides a department with resources that will help prevent costly accidents and injuries in the future. The basics for immediate fact-finding consist of six questions:

PHASE I

WHO? Get names, locations, and phone numbers for all individuals on the scene: both victim(s) and witness(es).

WHAT? Try to ascertain exactly what happened...what people were doing immediately prior to the accident...what went wrong...what was done in the immediate aftermath that either minimized or maximized injury or damage.

WHY? Ask why people did what they did...why they were doing them in the way that precipitated the accident...why conditions were such that the accident occurred.

WHEN? Pinpoint the sequence of events during the accident and record the precise time and date it occurred.

WHERE? Carefully define, or create a diagram of the accident scene, if appropriate, and place all elements of the accident, each participant, victim(s) and witness(es), within the diagram.

HOW? Have each participant provide a statement as to how the accident occurred and how the accident could have been prevented.

PHASE II

Once a clear understanding of the components of the accident are gathered, the evaluation phase of the investigation can begin. NOTE: Evaluations are based on the answers from PHASE I, therefore, it is imperative to do everything possible to ensure the accuracy of the answers required of Phase I.

An evaluation should center on the search for answers to the following questions:

- Was there anything at the accident scene to indicate that a lack of housekeeping or order contributed to the accident?
- Did environmental conditions contribute to the accident? Temperature extremes? Hazardous materials? Water? Noise? Lighting? etc...
- Was the physical layout or design of the facility/worksite and its contents adequate for the job that needed to be done?
- Were there adequate procedures and rules developed to deal with this process or task?
- Were employee(s) adequately trained in the correct procedures?
- Did employee(s) have the skills to perform the task?
- Could the accident have been avoided by a more appropriate act on the part of the involved employee?
- Was Personal Protective Equipment available to the injured employee(s)?
- Did the employee(s) recognize that a hazard existed?
- Did the employee(s) use the proper equipment to do the job?

- Was the injury due to a previous injury or illness, or a current health condition?

PHASE III

The sole purpose of accident investigation is to identify the CAUSE of the incident, that is, what could have been done differently to have prevented the incident.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION FOLLOW-UP

After an investigation is performed and the cause of the accident is determined, it is imperative that a supervisor take steps to ensure the same type accident does not occur again. Supervisor must constantly monitor the workplace and work practices to assure the remedy is doing what it is supposed to do.

safety/docs/sftymnl/master/accinvest.doc

County of San Bernardino
OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS/INJURY INVESTIGATION REPORT

Employee Name:	Department:
Reporting Supervisor:	Telephone Number:
Street Address Where Incident Occurred:	
Where, at the above address, did the accident occur? (Use reverse side, if necessary or appropriate, to draw a diagram or give a detailed description of the accident scene below. Do not repeat street address.)	
Explain exactly what occurred::	
What has or will be done to prevent further like-accidents?	
Explain what employee was doing when accident occurred:	
If employee activity was inappropriate, why was task done in the manner?	
Was employee performing task as trained?	
What training has been documented for injured employee as to correct way to perform the particular task?	
If applicable, why was employee not using protective clothing or equipment?	
Is employee retraining necessary?	
If no, why not?	
If yes, when will it be completed?	
Witnesses to the accident:	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Safety Committee recommendation:	
Department Head Signature:	
Safety Committee Review Date:	

SAFETY/DOCS/SFTYMNL/MASTER/ACCINVEST.DOC