Incident Investigations

The New Investigator
WCB Statistics

Each Week in BC (2017)

- 3.8 Deaths from workplace injury and illness
- 72 Workers suffer from permanent disability
- 3,140 Work injuries reported to the WCB
- $22,000,000 paid in claims

WorkSafeBC Annual Report 2017
Why Investigate??

- The purpose of the investigation is **PREVENTION**. We need to gather all the available information in order to reduce or eliminate the possibility of a similar incident in the future.

- The Investigation is not intended to attach blame. We are **NOT ALLOWED** to blame anyone.
Its Happened

What’s Next!

- What
- When
- Where
- Why
- Who
- How
Consider These Known's!

- We **CANNOT** undo what has been done. We can only use this as a learning moment – no matter how minor or major the event is.
- Witnesses **DO NOT** see incidents – they only see their part of the incidents.
First 2 Issues

- Objectivity
- Emotion
2 Investigations (WorkSafeBC)

- **Preliminary Investigation**
  - Completed within 48 hours
  - Include preventive measures
  - Available to WorkSafeBC

- **Full Investigation**
  - Completed within 30 days
  - Include preventive measures
  - Submitted to WorkSafeBC with the 30 days
What do we Investigate

- All Near Miss Incidents
- All Exposures
- All First Aid Incidents
- All Injury Incidents
- All Vehicle Related Incidents
Investigation Process

- Preparation
- Visiting Scene
- Interviewing
- Evaluating
- Writing the Report
- Follow Up
Key Attitudes/Attributes of Competent Investigators

1. Assumes that all accidents are preventable.
2. Looks for many causes, not just the first.
3. Never goes looking for a culprit.
4. Is as objective as possible.
5. Always keeps the purpose of the investigation in mind.
Visiting Scene

- Secure the scene – minimize risk of injury further injury
- Ensure injured are cared for
- Keep area undisturbed
- Gather and record physical data
- Identify persons with information about the accident (names, positions)
- Begin interviewing where possible
- Start investigation report (date, time, etc.)
Necessary Facts

- Who was involved or injured? Were there witnesses?
- Where did the accident happen? (Department, location, etc.)
- When did the accident occur? (Date, time, shift)
- What were the immediate and basic causes? (Acts, conditions, procedures, equipment)
- Why was the unsafe act/condition allowed? (Lack of training and supervision, poor morale, etc.)
- How can a similar incident be prevented?
“Capturing” The Scene

- **Assume Nothing**
- “Let the scene **TELL YOU** what happened”
- **Pictures** (Digital, Video, Stills) – what, when, where
- **Sketches** (General, Precise)
- What about the **small stuff***???
“Capturing” The Scene

- The Scene Will **NEVER** be The Same
- Some Elements Start to **DISAPPEAR IN MINUTES**
- Evidence Types
  - Primary Short Lived
  - Secondary Short Lived
  - Long-Term
“Capturing” the Scene - Culture

- **Is Safety Actually Practiced and Important Here?**
  - Talking vs. Walking

- **What do Workers Routinely “Get Away With”**

- **Is Safety ever Compromised?**
  - “Just This Once ...........”
  - “We Can Probably Get Away With ...........”
  - “Do We Have To ...........”
  - “We Won’t Push ...........”
“Capturing” the Scene – Photographs

- 8 Most Important Pictures
  - Inside Out
  - Outside In
- “I Need This Information”
- “I Don’t Know What This Is”
- “I Don’t Know What This Means”

All Reasons To Take Pictures
Accident Causation

Why Did the Accident Really Happen?

- **Emotions** – Personal Issues
- **Pressure** – Supervision Methods
- **Equipment Conditions** – Preventative Maintenance
- **Is it the Right Equipment?**
- **Crew Training** – How, When
- **Victim Training** – How, When
- **Unusual Job** – Different Method
Interviewing People

- Take your time
- Put the person at ease
- Purpose of interview
- “Tell me in your own words”
  - Don’t interrupt
  - Don’t take notes
  - Don’t jump to conclusions
Interviewing People (Cont.)

- Repeat Story
  - Take notes
  - Ask questions to fill in the gaps
- Identify facts from opinions
- Ask for suggestions
- Wrap up
Common Errors

- Believing carelessness is a cause of accidents.
- Assuming contradictory evidence indicates falsehood.
- Conducting interviews as if in a courtroom.
- Asking for a signed statement.
- Looking for only one basic cause.
- Forgetting about the personal feelings of others.
- Failing to keep information confidential.
Evaluating Information

- Be objective - don’t start with a fixed opinion
- Set out events in chronological order
- Be sure to consider ALL contributing factors
- Use a checklist to ensure you have covered all areas
- Consider information
  - direct
  - indirect
  - circumstantial
- DO NOT draw conclusions on the first basic cause found
Direct Evidence

- Physical Evidence
- The Scene
- On-Site Witnesses
- Equipment Manuals
- Work Procedures

**CONSIDERED BEST EVIDENCE**
Indirect Evidence

- Training Records
- Inspection Reports
- Third Party Witnesses

**INDICATORS**
Circumstantial Evidence

- Opinions
- Previous Incidents
- Similar Incidents
  - “COULD-A, SHOULD-A, WOULD-A”
Report Writing

- **Include** a brief outline of events leading up to and including the accident/incident
- **Describe** events in chronological order
- **Be specific** - include dates, times, places, people involved, conditions, etc.
- **Attach** diagrams, photos, specs, etc.
- **Recommendations should treat** the basic causes, not the symptoms
- **Recommendations must address** all contributing factors.
That’s It

QUESTIONS

COMMENTS

CONCERNS