

RISK COMMUNIQUÉ

Accident Investigation

Accident analysis is based on the concept that behind every accident lies primary factors that directly contribute to the accident's occurrence. The primary goal of an accident analysis program is to first identify these underlying, or "root causes" of accidents, and then apply corrective measures to help reduce and ultimately eliminate accidental losses from occurring in the workplace.

Accident analysis is performed on an individual loss, accident, or incident. Typically, larger losses and accidents that are frequent occurrences are good candidates for accident analysis. The performance of an accident analysis should be used as a tool to help employers prevent accidents rather than as a means of investigating or adjusting specific injury claims.

PROCEDURE

To reveal the root causes behind an accident or unsafe condition, the following questions should be asked of management, fellow employees, and the injured parties:

1. **What was the employee doing?** Describe the activity as well as the equipment, materials, people and environmental conditions involved in the accident. Use the attached flow chart to help isolate the conditions responsible for the accident or injury. Be specific. Examples: "climbing a ladder while carrying a box of books."
2. **What happened?** Describe how the injury or illness occurred. Indicate in detail what took place; describe the accident, the type of injury, if the employee was wearing appropriate safety equipment, etc. Examples: "when ladder slipped worker fell 20 feet and broke his legs".
3. **What caused the accident?** Explain in detail the condition, act, malfunction, etc., that caused the accident. Remember that it is possible to have more than one reason or cause for an accident. Use the attached flow chart. Examples: "Rainwater had entered through a hole in the roof and caused the floor to be wet and the ladder then slipped out from under the worker".
4. **What can be done to prevent a similar accident?** Indicate corrective action to prevent recurrence.

Results of the accident analysis will be recorded on the attached Accident Investigation Form.