



Conduct An Investigation Into Workplace Incidents

Handout 2

Incident Questions

List of questions to ask when investigating an incident

1. Task – The work procedure used at the time of the incident.	
Was a safe work procedure used?	
Had conditions changed to make the normal procedure unsafe?	
Were the appropriate tools, materials available?	
Were they used?	
Was all of the required personal protective equipment available?	
Were inherent safety devices, alarms or other systems in place?	
Were all backup safety devices or systems in place?	
Was the task structured to encourage/discourage safe work practices or procedures?	
2. Material/Equipment – Causes brought about by the equipment or materials used.	
Was there an equipment malfunction or failure?	
What caused it to fail?	
Was the material or equipment substandard in some way?	
Was personal protective equipment used? Should it have been?	
Were hazardous substances involved?	
Were tools, machinery and equipment being used correctly? (Check manufacturers specifications for operating tools, machinery and equipment as well as any other applicable standards)	
Were tools or machinery modified in any way?	
3. Worker(s) – The factors related to workers include individual experience, skills and abilities as well as one’s physical capabilities, and emotional state at the time of the incident.	
Were workers aware of the standards, practices, procedures or legislation governing the activity?	
Were workers adequately trained to do the task in question according to standards, practices and procedures prescribed?	
What training had the worker received?	

What experience did the worker have to do the task?	
Was the worker physically capable?	
Was judgment, health and/or ability impaired for any reason? (e.g. Were they Tired? Rushed? Stressed? Using Medication?)	
4. Management – The employer is responsible for ensuring the safety and health of workers at the workplace and is therefore responsible for the policies, procedures and rules on the job. This also includes enforcing the policies, procedures and rules. Management staff (managers, supervisors, lead hands, etc.) must always be considered in an incident investigation since they are responsible for providing direction and supervision.	
Were the hazards which led to this incident known to supervisors?	
Were standards, practices and procedures developed and implemented to overcome these hazards?	
Were supervisors aware of the standards, practices, procedures or legislation governing the activity?	
Were safety and health rules in effect?	
Were they being enforced?	
Was adequate supervision given?	
Was regular maintenance of equipment carried out?	
Were unsafe conditions corrected?	