



investigation and documentation

When a work-related injury or incident occurs, an investigation should be conducted and thoroughly documented by the management team at the employer's business.

Injury investigation

It is important for the investigation to occur as soon as the individuals with knowledge of the incident or injury can be contacted. Photographs of the scene may be appropriate in addition to the written documentation. CompManagement Health Systems (CHS) provides samples of investigation forms that can be modified to meet each client's needs.

Key factors that should be considered:

- Task-related issues
 - Ergonomics
 - Safe work procedures
 - Conditions
 - Changes
 - Appropriate tools
 - Safety devices
- Materials
 - Equipment failure
 - Machine design
 - Guarding
 - Hazardous substances
 - Substandard materials
- Environment
 - Weather conditions
 - Housekeeping
 - Temperature
 - Lighting
 - Personal protective equipment
- Employee-related issues
 - Experience level
 - Training
 - Physical capability
 - Health
 - Fatigue
 - Stress
- Management/process concerns
 - Safety policies
 - Enforcement of safety policies
 - Adequacy of supervision
 - Knowledge of hazards
 - Hazard correction
 - Preventative maintenance
 - Regular safety audits

over

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Questions to ask

- What was the employee doing just before the injury occurred?
 - Describe activity, tools, equipment, material, etc.
- What happened? How did the incident occur?
- What object or substance directly harmed the employee?
 - This may not apply depending on the injury
- Were unsafe acts involved?
 - This may include the injured party or others
- Were there unsafe conditions involved?
 - This could include weather, ventilation, building, equipment, etc.

Injury documentation

Any workplace incident should be documented whether or not it results in an injury or illness. The information on the injury reporting forms will help clarify medical conditions related to the claim; and can help employers identify the need for training, safety equipment, or procedural improvements.

Use the appropriate form

An incident or injury should be documented on a form developed for the employer. CHS provides sample injury/incident reporting forms and helps clients develop customized forms. Supervisors and any witnesses should document the incident. Multiple witnesses must submit separate written accounts of the incident.

Make it mandatory

Communicate expectations with employees, senior managers and supervisors for documenting and reporting injuries. It should be considered protection for both the employee and the employer.

Be thorough

The details of an injury are key factors in determining the appropriate medical conditions that should or should not be included in a workers' compensation claim, so it is important to describe the incident in detail. General statements such as "I hurt my back" leave much to the physician's interpretation, and can be understood differently by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) and by hearing officers with the Industrial Commission when considering the scope of a claim.

Timing is important

The earlier the incident is reported, the more valuable the information is. The documentation of an incident can be important to BWC in the decision making process for claim allowance and to physicians when determining appropriate treatment.

Train supervisors

The documentation should be timely and thorough. Be sure supervisors understand the expectations of the report. CHS can provide clients with training for supervisors and managers on injury reporting and post-injury protocol.

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