

Appendix A: Incident Investigations

Use this checklist to structure investigations and document the review within **riskware**. It is intended only as a guide.

The significance of the incident should inform the investigation. Consider the actual outcomes and worst-case scenarios that could have resulted from the incident and whether a similar incident is likely to occur. As a 'rule of thumb', you should put more effort into investigations that are more significant or could have had serious consequences.

Establish....

The Facts

- Names of injured/ill employees/witnesses/people 'early on' the scene
- Condition of any equipment
- Any chemicals /substances in use or present
- Layout of area
- Management of stress
- Place, time, conditions
- Extent of any injury/ill health/damage/disruption
- Make use of camera, sketches, measurement to record the undisturbed scene
- Consider taking statements from those who were witnesses – statements should be signed by witnesses below the declaration 'I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true'

What was happening?

What was being done at the time and what happened?

- Immediate causes
- Events leading up to the incident
- Any evidence linking case of ill health to work
- Competence, e.g., what instructions and training were given before the event and how much experience in the job did the people involved (including Nominated Supervisors) have? Were staff members, students, contractors, or visitors aware of the dangers associated with the activity?
- What were the established methods of carrying out the task? Were they adequate? Were they being followed?
- Behaviour and actions of individuals
- Role of nominated supervisors: Were the impacted staff member/s or student/s instructed to carry out the task/activity or were they acting on their own initiative?
- What was the worst that could have happened?
- Has something similar happened before?
- Could it happen again?

The best way to do it

- How should the job have been done?
- How was it done?
- Review any WHS risk assessments and procedures for the activity.
- What precautions should have been in force?
- What training should those carrying out the activity have received?
- What precautions were taken? Compare them with those which should have been taken. What training was given? Compare it with training which should have been given.

What a More Effective Response 'looks like?'

Was prompt and appropriate action taken, such as making the area safe (e.g., electrical isolation, suitable firefighting, effective first aid responses and applying correct spillage procedures) and were any continuing risks effectively dealt with?

How can our responses be improved?

Why did it occur? (Contributing Factors)

These might include:

- Management or supervision failure
- Lack of competence
- Inadequate training
- Absence of supervisory support e.g., manage workload or other psychosocial hazards
- Any short comings in original design of equipment or facilities, or whether human error (such as rushing to a meeting), or environmental conditions were contributing factors
- A failure to comply with/supervise safe work instructions
- Absence of a system for maintenance

Avoid a Reoccurrence

When making decisions about the right course of action, think whether the outcome could have been more serious and what prevented this from happening?

Assess the precautions within a relevant WHS risk assessment – can it be improved to reduce the WHS of a reoccurrence?

If the intended precautions appear adequate but they were not fully implemented...why was this? What needs to be done to ensure necessary precautions are taken in the future?

Actions to prevent a recurrence might include:

- Assess and manage risks
- Improve physical safeguards
- Introduce better test and maintenance arrangements
- Improve safe work methods
- Provide adequate support to staff
- Ensure that supervisory support is available to support staff to apply safety instructions
- Provide and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Make changes to supervision and training arrangements
- Review similar dangers elsewhere across ACU
- Review procedures involving outside contractors
- Improve inspection systems