



GOALS

This safety session should teach employees that:

- The purpose of investigating accidents is not to place blame.
- Most accidents have several underlying causes.
- By investigating and finding these causes, we can prevent future accidents.

Applicable Regulations: 29 CFR 1904—Recording and reporting occupational injuries and illnesses



1. Investigating accidents (and near misses) can prevent future accidents.

- Often there are dangerous underlying conditions that will cause future incidents, unless they are discovered.
- There may be several close calls and even some minor accidents that precede a major accident with serious injuries.
- If we discover the dangerous conditions after a close call, that serious accident may never happen.

2. All accidents (and near misses) should be reported and investigated promptly.

- Get the facts as soon as possible while people's memories are fresh.
- Observe the scene of the incident to see if there are clues to factors that could have caused a problem.
- Interview everyone involved, as well as any witnesses.
- The purpose of investigation is not to find someone to blame.
- The investigation should ask what, when, where, who, how, and why.
- Pay special attention if there have been similar occurrences in the past.
- See if there seems to be a condition that contributed to the accident that can be changed to prevent the same thing from happening again.

3. Consider the variety of factors that can contribute to an accident.

Cause—Equipment malfunction	Remedy—Better inspection and maintenance
Cause—Bad weather	Remedy—Extra care to compensate
Cause—Worker inattention	Remedy—Eliminate distractions like noise
Cause—Poor lighting	Remedy—Improve work area conditions
Cause—Inadequate training	Remedy—Increase supervision and training

4. Prevention is the goal of accident investigation.

- Even one dangerous factor may be enough to trigger several close calls.
- Combining several of these factors can increase the likelihood of an actual accident.
- By recognizing and correcting these hazards, however, we can decrease the chance of a preventable accident.

5. Cooperate with investigators to discover the causes—there may be several factors involved.

- Don't disturb the accident scene, unless it is necessary to help a victim who is injured.



- Try to remember as much as possible about conditions at the time of the accident—writing facts down before you forget is a good idea.
- Even if you were not directly involved or an actual witness, you may know of a condition that could have been a contributing element.

6. Physical aspects of the work environment often set the stage for an accident.

- Make sure the work area is clean and well lit.
- Make sure there are no fire or electrical hazards.
- See that exit routes are well marked and are never blocked.
- Keep all equipment in good repair and have all guards in place.
- Use the proper equipment to perform the job safely.
- Reduce the noise level as much as possible.

7. Everyone can help prevent accidents by following safe procedures.

- Wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times.
- Be sure to follow all safety rules.
- Pay special attention to new or young employees to be sure they are capable of working on their own—perhaps you can give them a hand.
- Don't try to speed production by taking unsafe shortcuts.
- Observe behavior that might indicate health problems or drug or alcohol use and report it to your supervisor.
- Offer suggestions if you have an idea that will improve safety.

8. Some accidents must be reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

- Fatalities must be reported to OSHA within 8 hours.
- Accidents that result in inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye must be reported within 24 hours.
- Report by calling or visiting your local OSHA area office, calling OSHA's hotline at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), or using OSHA's online reporting form at <https://www.osha.gov/pls/ser/serform.html>.



DISCUSSION POINTS:

- If there has been a recent accident or close call, analyze that incident to see if workers can suggest underlying causes. If so, ask for suggestions for changes.
- If there have been no actual incidents, perhaps workers have noticed hazards that could cause future problems. Again, they may have ideas for improvements.



CONCLUSION:

No one wants accidents and injuries to occur. Accident investigation should be a tool to ensure that there are no repeated incidents.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Have your workers take the Investigate to Prevent Accidents quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their understanding of the purpose of accident investigation, their willingness to cooperate with investigators, and whether they need to review this important topic again soon.



INVESTIGATE TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS QUIZ

1. It is best to let some time pass before investigating an accident so that investigators and witnesses can be more objective about the situation.
a. True b. False
2. Only employees who were directly involved should participate in an accident investigation.
a. True b. False
3. You only need to report an accident if someone is hurt.
a. True b. False
4. The purpose of an accident investigation is to find out who is at fault.
a. True b. False
5. Three key questions that must be answered by an investigation are, What happened? Why did it happen? and How can we keep it from happening again?
a. True b. False
6. If you witness an accident, it is a good idea to write down what you saw as soon after the incident as possible, before your memory fades or the facts become distorted in your mind.
a. True b. False
7. The most important part of any accident investigation is determining the cause(s) of the accident and deciding what corrective action needs to be taken to prevent a similar accident in the future.
a. True b. False
8. Most accidents have only one cause.
a. True b. False
9. Physical factors can set the stage for an accident.
a. True b. False
10. Near misses should not be investigated because no accident actually took place.
a. True b. False

When you have completed this quiz, turn it in to your supervisor.

Name: _____

Date: _____



Safety Trainer **Investigate to Prevent Accidents**

ANSWERS TO INVESTIGATE TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS QUIZ

1. b. False. Accidents should be investigated as soon after they happen as possible, before memories fade and the trail of evidence grows cold.
2. b. False. Witnesses play an important role as do other workers who may know of any factor that could have contributed to causing the accident.
3. b. False. All accidents should be reported, even if no one is hurt or if injuries are minor.
4. b. False. The purpose of an investigation is to find out what went wrong and to correct it so that future accidents can be prevented. Placing blame has no part in an accident investigation.
5. a. True.
6. a. True.
7. a. True.
8. b. False. Most accidents have several underlying causes.
9. a. True.
10. b. False. The same factors that caused the near miss may occur again, but next time, they might cause an accident.