

Memo from the University Safety Office

Date: October 30, 2006

From: Wendel Reece, University Safety Manager

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RE: Accident Investigation

Accident Investigation

The University Safety Office is committed to help lower the number of accidents and injuries that occur on campus. An accident investigation form, University Accident Investigation Report (2007), will be sent on all "First Report of Injury" forms received from the University HRS Department. The accident investigation form will need to be filled out by the person who the employee reports to (i.e. supervisor, manager).

Accident investigation is the process that focuses on why the injury happened. It is not used as a means to place blame. It is used to identify deficiencies in procedures or work environment. The ultimate goal is to eliminate existing hazards or conditions that create the potential for a repeat accident or injury.

Please keep in mind that the quicker the accident investigation is done, the easier it is. The facts are often forgotten as time goes by. Without accurate information, the existing hazard may go unidentified.

Thank you for your assistance in achieving our goal to have everyone go home safe and sound - everyday. If you have questions about the form or process, please contact the University Safety Office at 3-5855.

Accident Investigation Process

All accidents resulting in an injury to an employee should be investigated promptly. This investigation should not be confused with the reporting of accidents to HRS using their form "First Report of Injury". The purpose of accident investigation is not to fix blame or find fault. The accident investigation has only one purpose - determination of the basic (root) cause of the accident so that future accidents may be prevented.

The immediate supervisor or manager of the employee involved is responsible to conduct the accident investigation. The University Accident Investigation Report is to be filled out and returned to the University Safety Office by that supervisor or manager.

The form consist of 4 sections:

1. Background Information - where and when the accident occurred, who and what were involved.
2. Account of Accident - exactly what happened, what was the sequence of the events and extent of damage.
3. Analysis of Accident - discussion of How and Why the accident occurred, what was the direct cause, were there any indirect causes related to the accident, was lack of training an issue?
4. Recommendations - what needs to be done to prevent this accident from ever happening again, immediate remedies, and long term actions needed?

Since conditions change and memories fade quickly, investigation should be conducted as soon as possible after the accident. Develop the facts of the accident. Make sure to speak not only with the employee who had the accident, but also with any witnesses. Ask open-ended questions that prompt witnesses to give more than yes or no answers. Visit the scene of the accident. Make a sketch of the area if it will make the description more clear. Ask witnesses what they think could be done to prevent the accident from happening again.

Remember in conducting an accident investigation; avoid blame fixing or fault finding. It must be clear to everyone involved that the purpose of the investigation is to determine what can be done to prevent the accident from ever happening again.