

Accident/Incident Investigation Guidance Document

Introduction



Aren't most accidents individuals' faults?

'Blaming individuals is fruitless and sustains the myth that accidents and cases of ill health are unavoidable when the opposite is true. Learning the lessons from what your investigation uncovers is at the heart of preventing incidents. Identify what is wrong and take positive steps to put it right.'

The investigation and analysis of work-related accident/incidents forms an essential part of managing health and safety. The Council can only improve its Health and Safety performance by finding the true cause (root cause) of an accident/incident. This will allow for effective controls to be implemented to prevent reoccurrence, or continuous improvement.

Full Incident Investigation

Investigations should be completed for all incidents and serious near misses. The aim of the investigation is to identify **what happened** and **why**.

It is expected that the manager of the injured person completes the investigation process. Managers may delegate investigation actions e.g. examining site of the incident, taking photographs and witness statements to other members of staff but should be involved in formulating or agreeing the action plan and approving the investigation report (Manual Form).

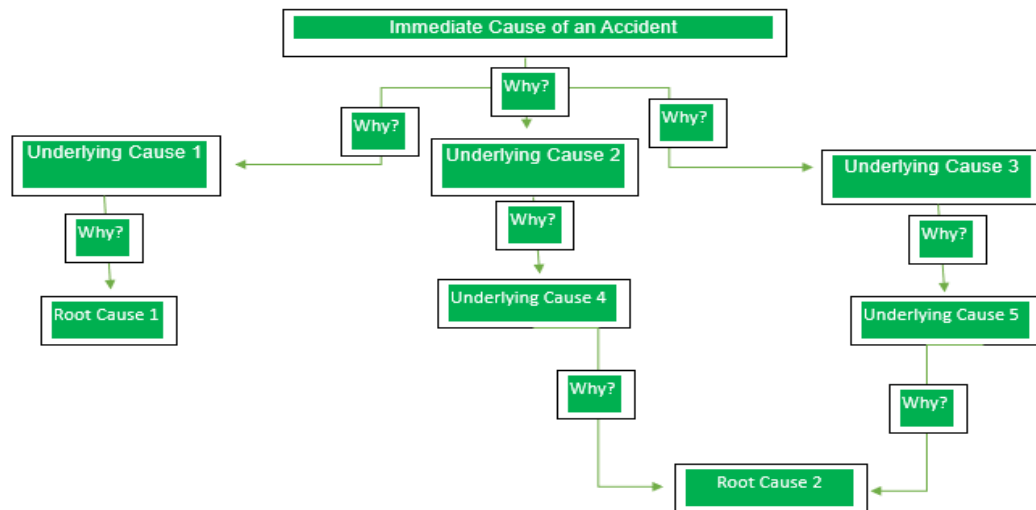
The incident investigation report has been designed to be completed by staff who are not trained investigators. The form consists of a series of questions which prompt who should be spoken to and what information to gather, the form can be handwritten or completed electronically. The finished form should be scanned (for handwritten forms) and uploaded to the accident report on the online system, this can be done in the managers section of the online reporting form.

The incident investigation should identify the root cause (an initiating event or failing from which all other causes or failings arise). Root causes are generally management, planning or organisational failings of the incident. The simplest way to identify the root cause is the "Five Why's" approach.

By asking 'Why?' up to five times, you can:

- Investigate the causes of an accident or incident.
- Identify solutions to prevent an incident happening again.
- Make links between the root causes of good or bad practice; and
- Learn good practice lessons to improve health and safety in your business.

Example Five Why Approach:



When using the “Five Why’s” analysis, try to:

- Ask proper questions that delve deeper into the issue. Simply repeating the word ‘Why?’ is not likely to help.
- Avoid being or appearing confrontational.
- Avoid making questions personal or accusatory (e.g. ask ‘Why do you think the ladder slipped?’ not ‘Why did you make the ladder slip?’)

This technique helps WCC gain a deeper understanding of the problems faced by our services until a root cause is uncovered, this will then allow the service manager to implement effective controls to reduce the likelihood of recurrence. The benefits of this technique are:

- Thorough Understanding - managers will discover hidden factors that contributed to the incident occurring.
- Cost Effective – it does not require advanced tools, making it accessible to the whole Council and affordable.
- Preventative Approach – By addressing the identified root causes, it will prevent future accidents.
- Continuous Improvement – The council can learn and enhance processes.

There are limitations to consider when you are using this technique during accident investigations:

- Surface Level Answers – Superficial answers may hinder reaching the true root cause of the incident.
- Subjective Interpretation – Different investigators could reach different conclusions from the same analysis; this is a natural issue, and so true and open discussions will be required.



FAQ

Why use the 5 why’s technique?

Investigating accidents thoroughly is crucial to avoid their recurrence and improve overall safety. The 5 Why Analysis is a structured approach that helps organisations delve deep into the causes of accidents, allowing them to address the root issues and prevent similar incidents in the future.

Investigation Summary

Direct Observations

Information from your own direct observation of the site of the accident.

Take photographs to aid observations.

- Layout of premises
- Equipment e.g. make/model/type/status/guards/power status.
- Presence (or absence) of articles or substances
- General conditions and housekeeping
- Other person(s) & activities present.
- Reconstruction of incident
- Measurements and plans
- Position of injured person/witnesses at time of the accident
- Presence of CCTV cameras
- Assess what you find.
- Check reliability, accuracy.
- Identify and resolve differences.
- Identify gaps in evidence.

Do you have a clear picture of what happened and why?

People to speak to

Information from:

- Injured person
- Direct witnesses
- First aider
- Other staff or students working in or managing the site where the incident took place.

Documents

Information from relevant documents:

- Accident report form
- First aider report
- E-mail(s)
- Risk assessments.
- COSHH assessments
- Manual handling assessments
- Staff training records
- Monitoring records e.g. dust/noise
- Maintenance/test results of equipment
- Previous accident reports
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance
- Other best practice guidance (industry)
- Minutes of meetings
- Safe operating procedures
- Safe systems of work
- Manufacturer's instructions
- Witness Statements

Accident/Incident Investigation Report

Completion of this form is only required for specific accidents/incidents identified by the WCC Workforce Health and Safety Team; this includes certain HSE RIDDOR reportable accidents/incidents and others of a serious nature.

Prior to this form being completed, details of the accident/incident should have already been reported using the WCC online reporting system.

This investigation report form needs to be completed by the injured person's manager, line manager, supervisor or team leader and seeks to ascertain more detailed information regarding the accident/incident. This investigation requires the analysis of all available information, including.

- Physical – the scene, equipment, evidence, photos
- Verbal – witness statements and.
- Written – risk assessments, procedures, instructions.

to identify what went wrong and to determine what action needs to be taken to prevent recurrence.

It may be necessary to involve additional specialist support, e.g. WCC Workforce Health and Safety Team depending on the complexity of the investigation and on occasions it may be the H&S Advisor that completes the report.

Part 1: Incident Details	
Investigation completed by: Name: Post title:	Date of investigation: Date and time of accident/incident: Incident Ref no (if known):
Name of person who suffered injury/ill health (<i>if applicable</i>) OR brief description of the incident.	

1. Exactly what was being done at the time and how did the accident/incident happen? <i>(give as much detail as possible)</i>
2. Explain the events/activities leading up to the accident/incident?
3 Was there anything unusual or different about the working conditions on this occasion?
4. Has there previously been any similar accidents/incidents that you are aware? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

If yes – give details.

5. Has a written risk assessment for the activity/process/operation been undertaken and is current?

Yes No

If No - please explain why one was not in place. (consider whether one is necessary and record your action in Part 2)

If Yes - was the risk assessment valid and up to date? (E.g. *has it been appropriately reviewed and is it representative of the activity/process/operation being undertaken*)

Yes No **If NO review immediately** and note this action in **Part 2**.

Were the risk assessment control measures being followed at the time of the accident/incident?

Yes *give details -*

No *explain why not -*

6. Were there any additional or indirect issues that influenced the accident/incident? (*For example, lack of supervision; lack of skills/ knowledge/ competence/ inappropriate working procedures/ violations; employee own actions*)

Yes No

If yes – give details.

7. Was maintenance, cleaning, housekeeping, or physical workplace conditions including layout of area, sufficient? (*For example, did the incident occur due to inadequate lighting, uneven floors, badly maintained machinery/ plant/ equipment, appliances, using work equipment*)

Yes No

Give details -

8. Were the people conducting the task competent and suitable? (*Did they have the necessary skills, knowledge, and training to perform the task and were records held of this e.g. training, PPE provided? Do not forget to consider young people and working practices*)

Yes No

If No – give details.

9. Were relevant safety support systems working and sufficient at the time of the accident/incident? *(For example, power supply isolation in place and used, e-stops enabled and located as necessary, local exhaust ventilation (LEV))*

Yes No N/A

Give details -

10. Have photographs been taken of the accident/incident site or other hard evidence kept?

Yes *(please attach)* No

Please state when the photographs were taken including date/time and attach them.

11. Additional Information

Part 2: Further action

12. What was the immediate, underlying and root cause?

(For example, consider whether training/supervision was sufficient, whether equipment was suitable, adequately maintained and fit for purpose, whether the safe system of work (ssow) was adequate and implemented. If the SSOW was inadequate, then please say why?)

13. What risk assessments and safe working procedures need to be written/ reviewed and updated? *(if applicable)*

Name of risk assessment/safe working procedure (SSOW)	Person responsible	Completion date

14. What needs to be done in the short and long term to prevent a recurrence? *(For example, floor repaired, revised SSOW, improved training and instruction)*

Control measure	Person responsible	Completion date

Items to be attached to this form <i>(where applicable)</i>	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Photographs <input type="checkbox"/> Witness statements. <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate risk assessment(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant training/competency documentation <input type="checkbox"/> Safe System of Work (SSOW) or Method Statement <input type="checkbox"/> PPE records <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace inspection reports <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment maintenance/ examination/use records	

Please state to whom the findings of this investigation have been forwarded: *(For example, those managers who are required to action findings of this investigation and those managers who require it for information)*

Name: _____ Post title: _____

Date forwarded: _____

Name of Manager/Officer completing investigation:	Signature:
Post Title:	Date:

When completed, attach as a supporting document to the ‘online’ accident recording system.

Any queries please ring Tel No: 01926 476803.

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