Accident Review: Introduction

One of the most common functions of a Safety Advisory Committee is the review of all accidents involving entity workers. It is essential that the Committee members realize that the "review" has no impact on safety unless it leads to something.

Similarly, categorizing an accident as "preventable" or "not preventable" has little, if any, benefit. The safety professional's mantra is that "all accidents are preventable."

Rather than "review," a better description of the needed activity is "analyze" — where the Safety Advisory Committee seeks the basic root causes for all — not just selected — losses. The goal is to identify all of the potential causes of the loss, and not to just concentrate on the final act.

Causes can include:
- Decision making by the employee and/or the supervisor;
- Accountability for allowing conditions or inappropriate activities to exist;
- Facilities, equipment and materials;
- Physical and/or mental contributors;
- Inadequate knowledge, skills, or judgment.

The purpose of determining the root causes is not to assign blame for the injury. The purpose is to address those root causes by finding solutions that will prevent similar accidents from occurring to other (or the same) entity workers. As the root causes are identified, and solutions applied, the frequency of loss injuries will decrease because the factors causing the injuries will no longer be a threat.