

Accident Investigation: Tips & Forms

The Safety Advisory Committee has two available approaches to take in their accident investigation process. The Committee can:

- Conduct their own investigations -- a time consuming luxury that might be difficult to staff, or
- Rely on the accident investigations conducted by the involved departments.
- (A third source is YCPARMIA: we conduct field investigations on about a quarter of all injuries.)

It is much more likely that the data used for the Committee review will come from the Employer's Report of Occupational Injury or Illness (the workers' compensation form 5020) and the entity's accident investigation report that was filled in by the injured worker's supervisor or manager.

- The amount of information available on these forms is very limited;
- The accident forms are often not designed to require detailed investigation;
- Rather than providing details, the reports often contain conclusions;
- Many reports seem to be completed with limited effort, thought, or recognition of its importance.

An accident investigation, properly done and documented in a thorough report by the supervisor, will often lead to recognition of safety factors, and responsive action by the department before the Committee even considers the accident.

- In that situation the Committee activity would be limited monitoring the process for consistency with the rest of the entity departments and recognition of the positive effort.
- It is in the best interest of the Committee to ensure that the entity's accident investigation form calls for pertinent information, and that the forms are fully completed by the involved supervisor.
- Training on the importance of the form (and on what kind of details need to be included) could be a recommendation made to management by the Committee.
- To support the importance of a supervisor investing a little extra time in safety investigations and reporting, it is important to realize that the average cost incurred on YCPARMIA workers' compensation claims over the last five fiscal years is almost \$5,000 per injury, with a range of \$0 to over \$500K.
- YCPARMIA offers a model accident investigation form that calls for meaningful information in the appendix.