

4.0 ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

4.1 General Information

*Note: The information given in this section primarily pertains to accidents/incidents that **do not involve a motor vehicle**. For additional information on accidents involving a motor vehicle, see section 18.*

Despite our best efforts to control and eliminate hazards, accidents will occur. When an accident occurs, there should be a universal method to investigating it. This is so that people can learn from unsafe acts or conditions that caused the accident to happen. Once these acts or conditions are identified, then corrective action can be recommended and implemented in the hope of preventing similar accidents in the future.

The extent to which an accident is investigated depends, in part, on the severity of the accident. However, the method of investigation should be uniform. This common method of accident investigation shall be discussed in this section of the EH & S Policy. These procedures will be included in Departmental Safety Coordinator training (see section 7).

If an employee is injured in a motor vehicle accident, the DA-2000 form is NOT to be used. Report directly to Human Resources, using the 1st report of Injury form only.

4.2 Persons Responsible for Accident Investigations

All accident investigations will involve the EH & S office and some will involve the DSC. Depending on the circumstances, an accident investigation may also involve any campus employee or student, and/or the administration. See section 2 for further descriptions of all of these persons and their responsibilities within the University safety policies.

If necessary, University Police are the first responders for emergencies on campus. Also, the EH&S office acts as a second point of contact after emergency personnel. Next, the employee or student involved in the accident should contact his or her departmental supervisor. All of these persons should be notified quickly after an accident has occurred to ensure fast response to that accident.

Emergency personnel are called to protect life and property in the event of an accident. At an accident scene, these persons are primarily in charge and decisions in dispute should be yielded to them. The DSC should be available to assist emergency personnel should they deem this assistance necessary. The DSC will also initiate the University's accident investigation as discussed in section 4.3. The EH & S office is available to assist the DSC in facilitating this investigation. The EH & S shall review all accident investigations and make recommendations for preventing them from reoccurrence. The

EH & S office shall follow-up on these recommendations, thereby completing the investigation process.

4.3 Procedures for Investigation

Note: These instructions shall be given to every Departmental Safety Coordinator as part of their required training.

There are seven (7) systematic steps in performing an accident investigation. These steps must be performed sequentially in order to ensure a thorough investigation. They are:

1. Be Prepared For the Accident
2. Help the Injured
3. Secure and Survey the Scene
4. Gather Evidence and Interview Witnesses
5. Analyze the Evidence
6. Recommend and Implement Changes
7. Follow-up on Those Changes

Step 1: Be Prepared For the Accident

When an accident occurs, fast response is important – especially in an emergency. DSC personnel should pay attention to the following guidelines:

- Read and understand all of these procedures before you are asked to respond to or investigate an accident. Know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Build an Accident Response Kit. That kit should include:
 - ✓ Sterile gloves
 - ✓ Basic first aid supplies
 - ✓ A tape measure
 - ✓ Blank DA2000 forms (discussed in section 4.4)
 - ✓ Blank paper and an ink pen
 - ✓ A copy of the university procedures for accident investigation (section 4)
 - ✓ A disposable camera (optional)
- Keep your Accident Response Kit in a secure location. Package these items in one container that you can get to quickly when an accident occurs.
- Be familiar with any hazardous or dangerous areas within your building.
- Understand the emergency evacuation floor plan for the areas within your building (see section 1.5).
- Know where the fire extinguishers are for your building and how to use them (for more information on fire extinguisher safety, see section 8.32).
- Know the emergency phone numbers associated with the department (see section 1.3).

Step 2: Help the Injured

Note: Additional information on helping the injured can be found in section 8.31, which pertains to first aid.

Once the DSC is notified of the accident, his or her first response is to help any injured persons, which includes notification of emergency personnel if necessary. No one is required to perform any emergency first aid to any victim. However, University employees have a duty to dial 911 or otherwise notify emergency personnel and assist in directing them to the injured.

This is **NOT** the time to investigate the accident. Follow these tips to facilitate this task:

- Do not panic. It is important for you to think clearly and calmly.
- If necessary, dial 911 and have emergency personnel routed to your exact location. When calling, be prepared to give information such as:
 - ✓ The phone number you are dialing from
 - ✓ The street address of the accident location
 - ✓ The building and area of the accident including the room number
 - ✓ The nature of the injured – are they conscious? Are they breathing?
 - ✓ Any special circumstances that may be involved in the accident (such as chemical spills, loss of oxygen, electrical shock, etc.)
- If emergency personnel are notified, stay on the phone line until they arrive. The caller may be asked to give directions if emergency personnel are not sure how to locate the accident site.
- If necessary, ask someone else to stay on the phone line while you facilitate immediate first aid.
- With back or neck injuries, instruct these persons **NOT** to move unless it is necessary.
- For cuts, if possible, wash the area with clean water and apply pressure with a clean cloth to stop the bleeding.
- For burns, including chemical or heat related burns, hold the burned area under copious amounts of cold running water.

Step 3: Secure and Survey the Scene

This step should be implemented only **after** any injured persons have been assisted. If emergency personnel are in route, and it is not necessary to administer emergency first aid, then you should begin securing the scene.

- Solicit the help of others in the area. Speak directly to these individuals, but in a calm manner.

- If applicable, have one-person stand near the elevator on the first floor of the building and hold it open for emergency personnel.
- Have another person go to the street next to the building and alert emergency vehicles of the accident location.
- Any bystanders should be asked to stand clear of the area.
- Look around the accident scene. Be aware of your surroundings.
 - ✓ Are there any things capable of falling on the victims?
 - ✓ Are there any environmental conditions that could put you or others at risk?
 - ✓ Is there equipment or machinery that contributed to the accident still running?
 - ✓ How are the weather, lighting condition, and other environmental conditions?

Step 4: Gather the Evidence and Interview the Witnesses

Once the accident scene is secure, it is time to begin gathering evidence. This is where the accident investigator can expect to use items included in their accident response kit (see step 1 of this section). For any accident or injury that involves medical attention, this must be referred to Jenny Dorsett in the Personnel Office at 482-6246. In addition, if the accident involves an injury of any kind, the investigator should complete the ORM-DA2000 form as part of the investigation. For instructions on completing this form, please see section 4.4.

- If necessary, before moving anything, get a working drawing of the accident scene.
- If possible, take pictures of the accident scene.
- Observe the accident scene for general conditions. Look for things like:
 - ✓ Broken handrails
 - ✓ Chips in floor tile or a wrinkle in the carpet
 - ✓ Fluid spilled on the floor
 - ✓ Foul smells or odors – chemical or solvent odors
- Look at the equipment, furniture, and fixtures in the area where the accident occurred. Particularly pay attention to:
 - ✓ Chairs with wheels
 - ✓ Unstable ladders
 - ✓ Missing safety shields and guards
 - ✓ Warning labels that are not legible
 - ✓ Frayed or broken electrical cords
 - ✓ Equipment that looks broken or unsafe to operate
- Observe the person(s) involved in the accident. Are they wearing the proper PPE for the task they were performing when the accident happened?

When interviewing witnesses or people involved in the accident, they will be naturally nervous. This may have been a traumatic experience for them. Speak to them in a calm tone of voice. It is important for them to think clearly, so that the interviewer can get accurate information. Follow these guidelines when conducting interviews:

- If there are many bystanders, try to conduct an interview away from these people in a private location.
- Establish a relaxed atmosphere.
- Reassure this person that you are not trying to establish blame for the accident. Rather, just try to get the facts about what happened.
- Ask necessary questions, but do not prolong the interview.
- Be a good listener – do not interrupt witnesses.
- Ask open-ended questions. Try to obtain the “Who, What, Where, and How” of the accident.
- Close the interview on a positive note. Assure the person you are interviewing that the information given will be kept in confidence.
- While interviewing witnesses, take notes. Be sure to get the witness contact information include a telephone number.

Step 5: Analyze the Evidence

Once all of the evidence is gathered and witnesses have been interviewed, it is necessary to analyze this information in order to recommend and implement changes. The accident investigator may need the assistance of the EH & S director in this step. Use the following information when performing the accident analysis:

- Identify any unsafe acts that may have caused the accident to occur. Unsafe acts are performed by persons and not associated with environmental conditions. Examples include: improper lifting techniques, incorrect use of materials/equipment, not following safety procedures/directions, etc.
- Pay attention to unsafe conditions – both physical and environmental that can contribute to the accident. Examples include: leaky plumbing, sinkholes, faulty wiring, poor lighting, etc.
- Determine if proper training was a factor in the accident.
- Look at carelessness as a possible cause for the accident.
- Find out if a policy or procedural change is needed to prevent the accident from reoccurring.
- Other contributing factors that can cause accidents are:
 - ✓ Weather conditions
 - ✓ Improper lighting
 - ✓ Inoperable or failed warning systems
 - ✓ Poor Housekeeping
 - ✓ Availability or non-use of personal protective equipment
 - ✓ Inexperience or lack of understanding when operating equipment

- ✓ Altered consciousness – use of alcohol or drugs
- Consider that the accident may have more than one of these factors contributing to the cause.

Step 6: Recommend and Implement Changes

Once the accident has been analyzed, corrective action should be initiated as soon as possible. Use the following guidelines for this step of the investigation:

- If the investigator is unsure of what changes to recommend, he or she can contact the EH & S director or the department head for suggestions.
- Recommendations should be documented. Use the space provided in the root cause analysis section of the DA-2000 when applicable (see section 4.4).
- The immediate action should be implemented quickly to remove hazards and unsafe conditions that exist (i.e. “File down the sharp metal on the equipment”).
- Long-range actions should be suggested after the accident is investigated and all of the facts are obtained (i.e. “Train employees to check the equipment for sharp metal edges”).
- Notify other persons of these recommendations so that they will be aware of dangers and hazards that could affect them.
- Notify supervisors of these recommendations to ensure their compliance.

Step 7: Follow-up on Those Changes

- Once immediate or long-term corrective action has been implemented, the investigator should check on these changes within a reasonable time.
- During safety meetings (see section 6); accidents and corrective action can be reviewed and discussed with applicable employees.
- Contact supervisors and ensure that proper training was provided, if applicable
- Recheck accident scenes that have unsafe environmental conditions for corrective action. (Ex: The broken handrail has been fixed).
- Look at policies and procedures and make sure they have provisions for preventing the accident from reoccurring.

4.4 Reporting Accidents for Employees, DA-2000 Form

Documentation is an important part of performing accident investigations. Records must be uniform and consistent in order to understand the cause of an accident and prevent them from happening again. This documentation can also be used to study trends in hazards or unsafe environments. This documentation should be kept on file in the EH&S office for a minimum of one year.

Completion of the DA-2000 form is necessary for any accident that involves an injury to a university employee or contract employee. Instructions for completing this form are given later in this section and will be included in the training for every Departmental Safety Coordinator.

The Employee First Report of Injury form is necessary for employees or student workers who are injured on the job *and require professional medical attention and/or paid time off from work due to their injuries*. Instruct the injured to contact:

Personnel Department
Martin Hall, room 174
482-6242

The Personnel Department will use this form to file any Worker's Compensation paperwork.

Instructions for Completing the DA-2000 Incident/Accident Investigation Form

Note: These instructions shall be given to every Departmental Safety Coordinator as part of their required training. Please print when completing this form. The DA-2000 form is also available for download via the EH&S website at <http://www.safety.louisiana.edu>.

Field 7 – Please include information like “what task was the employee performing”, “what was the extent of the injury”, “was anyone else hurt in the incident”, etc.

Field 10 – If medical treatment is needed, the employee is free to attend the care facility of his/her choice. The employee is to tell the medical professional that this is for service related to an “on the job” accident. The employee is to ask the medical professional to contact the Human Resources Department at 482-6246 to ensure a worker compensation claim is initialized.

Field 18 – Training was provided to all Departmental Safety Coordinators during their orientation session

Field 19B – JSA stands for Job Safety Analysis

Root Cause Analysis Section

Note: This section may be completed after the evidence is gathered and during the analysis of that evidence (see step 5 for accident investigation). Completion of this section is mandatory. DA2000 forms with omissions in the Root Cause Analysis section will be returned to the department for correction.

- Keep any answers in this section concise and simple.
- Unsafe acts and conditions are the primary causes of the accident.

- An unsafe act is something that is done by a person or persons (Ex: Employee holding box knife too close to his other hand while operating the knife).
- An unsafe condition pertains to factors in the environment or area that cause the accident to occur (Area for cutting was too cramped for cutting boxes).
- Contributing factors are unsafe acts or conditions that also add to the accident (Ex: Employee was in a hurry while operating a sharp tool or the box knife blade was dull.).
- The immediate action should be implemented as soon as possible to remove immediate hazards (Ex: Administer first aid to the wound, purchase sharp knife blades, etc.).
- Long-range actions should be suggested after the accident is investigated and all of the facts are obtained (Ex: Train employee on the dangers of operating a sharp object in tight quarters. Train employee on the importance of working with sharp tools).

Other Instructions

- Once completed, mail the DA-2000 form to the Human Resources office
- A copy of every DA-2000 form will be sent to the EH&S office from the Human Resources office
- The EH&S office shall review every accident reported.
- The EH & S office shall maintain these records for a minimum of one year.
- DA-2000 forms are **NOT** to be used or completed for motor vehicle accidents

4.5 Reporting Accidents for Non-employees, DA-3000 Form

Completion of the DA-3000 form is necessary for any accident that involves an injury to someone who is NOT an employee (student, parent, visitor, etc.). Instructions for completing this form are given later in this section and will be included in the training for every Departmental Safety Coordinator.

Instructions for Completing the DA-3000 Incident/Accident Investigation Form

Note: These instructions shall be given to every Departmental Safety Coordinator as part of their required training. Please print when completing this form. The DA-3000 form is also available for download via the EH&S website.

Field 1 – The University’s location code is 5260

Field 10 – If you are not sure if the facility is state-owned or not, leave this field blank. The EH&S Director will investigate this and respond accordingly.

Field 11 – It is important for the person completing the report to verify, to any extent possible, the claim that the injured (or their representative) is making.

Field 14 – If an item needs to be tagged, contact the EH&S office (482-1840) for more information.

Other Instructions

- Once completed, mail the DA-2000 form to the EH&S office
- The EH&S office shall review every accident reported.
- The EH & S office shall maintain these records for a minimum of one year.