



Loss Control Department
Technical Information Paper Series

How To Investigate Workplace Accidents and Other Job Hindrances

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How to Investigate Workplace Accidents and Other Job Hindrances

A workplace accident is a clue that something has gone wrong, and it may be the first evidence that all is not well. Proper accident investigation can point the way, not merely to condition(s) that cause accidents, but to conditions that contribute to inefficiency, reduced productivity, and higher costs. The same conditions that cause accidents cause damaged equipment, damaged material, delays, waste, rejects and rework, personnel problems, customer complaints, loss of market share, and damaged public relations.

The Hartford's approach to attacking these "job hindrances" is that total responsibility for the control of accidents must rest with a company's line supervisors. Accidents result from operating conditions that the line supervisor or team leader can best control. When a supervisor or team leader views accidents in the same way that he or she views other job hindrances (that is, as preventable, undesirable events), he or she is in a better position to control accidents, and thus to improve total performance. Job hindrances interrupt or interfere with the orderly progress of the job.

Use an Investigative Approach to Identify Job Hindrances

A well-designed accident investigation form can be a *proactive* problem prevention tool. In addition to aiding in the investigation of workplace accidents, the questioning approach appropriate for response to an accident is useful for identifying and correcting all kinds of job hindrances. Do not wait for an accident or other incident to occur. After all, the true meaning of *accident prevention* is to identify and correct potential accidents *before* they occur.

Using the Investigation Form

Investigate the job, not the accident, to find out how conditions can be improved. (A sample of The Hartford's Supervisor's Investigation Report is attached.)

What Happened? Why did you make this investigation? Did an accident occur, or is some other job hindrance present that has the potential to create a job hindrance or a hazardous situation?

Why Did It Happen? Get *all* the facts before attempting to answer this question. The answer will uncover the responsible condition (that is, the root cause of the accident or other job hindrance). Use the "W" questions; remember to ask these question in the order in which they are presented here

First, ask:

Why? What? (Ask these questions *first* to eliminate unnecessary steps, processes, etc.)

Why does this task, step, process, etc., exist?

What useful purpose does it serve?

Next, ask:

Where? When? Who? (Ask these questions to *combine* or *arrange* steps or details.)

Where is the best place to do this job?

Where else does this exist?

Where else can I go to get more information?

When is the best time to do this job?

Who is best qualified to do it?

Then, ask:

How? (Ask this question to determine how this job can be done better.)

How can this job be simplified?

How can we do this more easily and more quickly?

Then, ask:

What should be done? (Ask this question, not to place blame, but to determine a practical solution.)

What should be done to correct the identified problem?

What Equipment, Material, and People items require additional attention?

Finally, ask:

What have you done thus far? List your accomplishments and follow-up actions. Be specific. If it was referred to management, indicate when and to whom.

How will this improve operations? This “sells” managers, supervisors, and employees on the benefits, not only of accident prevention and control, but of total operation control. For example, you may find that you can reduce training time by 15%, or eliminate 120 broken bags, or save \$9,524 per year in time and money spent for re-bagging and clean-up.

Although the sample form attached will help you develop a logical approach for asking questions and organization information, you can also just write the five questions on a blank sheet, using the “W” questions to explore which items from Equipment, Material, and People need attention and improvement. Use this organized approach to investigate all job hindrances, not just accidents. Remember, accident control = operations control.

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Supervisor's Investigation Report

Name	Age
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Time	Date		
Department	Shift		
Job	How long on this job?		
WHAT HAPPENED? <i>(Describe what took place or what caused you to make this investigation.)</i>			
WHY DID IT HAPPEN? <i>(Get all the facts by studying the job and situation involved. Question by use of WHY, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHO, HOW)</i>			
WHAT SHOULD BE DONE? <i>(Determine which of the 12 items under EMP requires additional attention.)</i>	Equipment Select Arrange Use Maintain	Material Select Place Handle Process	People Select Place Train Lead
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE THUS FAR? <i>(Take or recommend action, depending upon your authority. Follow up; was action effective?)</i>			
HOW WILL THIS IMPROVE OPERATIONS? <i>(OBJECTIVE: Eliminate job hindrances)</i>			
Investigated by	Date		
Reviewed by	Date		