

SCOTTS VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT		
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES	ARTICLE: II	SOP: 2106
	SECTION: 2100 SAFETY	
	SUBJECT: ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION	

Purpose: To investigate all work related accidents and to have a thorough program for accident investigation.

Scope: To assure a complete and thorough investigation of all work related accidents.

Procedure:

The investigation is to provide information for determining the cause of the accident and what can be done to prevent a similar accident. The duty chief will investigate all accidents. Accidents involving fire, death, serious injury, or extensive property damage will be investigated by the duty chief and the safety officer and may include outside investigators based on the discretion of the Fire Chief. The objective of the investigation is to be *fact finding -- not fault finding*. The completed investigation report will be sent to the safety officer for review.

NOTE: This is a supplement to SOP 1105, *Reporting Work Related Injuries*.

1. When an employee is injured at work, the supervisor will be responsible for taking emergency action as follows:
 - Administer first aid
 - Obtain professional medical attention if needed
 - Protect other employees and equipment
 - Notify the duty chief and safety officer of the situation

2. The *Accident Investigation Report Form, attached*, will be used to prepare reports required by:
 - Federal and state law
 - Workers' compensation insurance carriers

Contact Cal-OSHA's San Jose Office at (408) 452-7288 to report any injuries where an employee is expected to be

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hospitalized for more than 8 hours. The notification must take place within 8 hours after the injury occurs so that Cal-OSHA can conduct a prompt investigation.

3. Guidelines for an Investigation

In order to perform a useful investigation, the investigator will have to interview witnesses. The investigating person will attempt to recreate the entire incident. The investigator needs to identify what was going on before and during the accident in order to prevent it from reoccurring. The following guidelines will help the investigator conduct an investigation:

- A. Complete the investigation as soon after the accident as possible. People forget details quickly in an emotional situation.
- B. Photograph the area, tools, equipment, and processes. Photographing employee's faces is not recommended.
- C. Interview all persons involved with the accident.
- D. When interviewing witnesses after an accident, it is important to put each person at ease. Tell the person you are looking for the facts only and not trying to blame anyone. Placing blame only hinders you in obtaining useful information. Putting the person at ease should be done several times during the interview.
- E. Interview employees separately. In this way, what one person says will not influence what someone else says. Multiple versions of the same incident create a more complete picture.
- F. Ask open-ended questions that do not elicit one-word answers, such as "What did you see"?
- G. During the interviews, inform each witness of what is being done for the injured person.

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- H. Avoid talk that will mislead or confuse the witnesses.
 - I. Do not accept, deny, or promise anything. The purpose of the investigation is to gather facts only.
4. Questions to be answered
- A. What was/were the person/persons involved doing at the time of the accident?
 - B. What tools or equipment were involved, if any?
 - C. Where did the accident occur? (Be specific, including location, area, or job site).
 - D. What was happening around the work area (external influences)?
 - E. Did the person/persons involved know what the hazard was?
 - F. Was the person/persons involved trained to do the job in question?
 - G. What contributed to this accident? (i.e., another work group, defective tool, faulty equipment).
 - H. Was more than one person involved? If so, who and how?
 - I. Were there any witnesses? If so, who are they and what did they see?
 - J. In your opinion, was the accident preventable? If so, how?
 - K. Based on answers received in the investigation, make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence.

Note: Recommendations must be action oriented. "Be more careful" is not a satisfactory recommendation. All recommendation shall be included in a written report to the Fire Chief.

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5. Required Written Reporting

The *Accident Investigation Report* must be filled out after all accidents. Employees must be offered a workers' compensation packet within 24-hours of the occurrence of the accident.

If there are injuries, the following forms must be filled out. (*Refer to SOP's relating to accident reporting.*)

- A. Employee claim for workers' compensation benefits
- B. Employee-employer report of occupational injury or illness
- C. Supervisor's accident report - workers' compensation claims

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