

▶ Accident Investigation



An introduction
to SafetreeTM

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Accident Investigation

When an accident or near miss happens, it's important to work out exactly what went wrong – or almost went wrong – so you can learn how to make sure it never happens again.

To investigate an accident:

- 1. Go to the accident scene** and do what needs to be done to make sure no one else can get hurt. Secure the scene to preserve evidence.
- 2. Record details** such as conditions, equipment and the people involved. You may need to take photos and draw up a diagram of the area with measurements and distances included. A plan of the workplace will help, if there is one.
- 3. Check documentation**
 - ▶ Prescription/planning documents provided by the forest management company
 - ▶ Work plans for tasks, such as tree falling, breaking out, tree processing
 - ▶ Daily tailgate meeting records
 - ▶ What job instructions were given
 - ▶ Training, learning, induction records.
- 4. WorkSafe NZ** needs to be notified – check that's been done.
- 5. Interview witnesses** or others involved in the work activity, starting with eyewitnesses to the accident, including the injured person/s if they can talk.
 - ▶ **Ask: "What happened, When, Where, Who, Why, How?"** Establish what went wrong with the existing system of control.
- 6. Understand the sequence of events** leading up to the accident, during it, what emergency response was taken to prevent further harm, and what was done to secure the scene.
- 7. Identify** all hazards involved:
 - ▶ Equipment and materials
 - ▶ Work practices and procedures
 - ▶ The work environment
 - ▶ Fatigue – the hours of work, tasks performed, production pressure
 - ▶ Any health issues
 - ▶ Other contributing circumstances.
- 8. Assess the controls** that were in place, whether they were adequate, what could be improved, how training could help and who it might help.

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9. Establish underlying or root causes:

- ▶ Inadequate supervision due to...
- ▶ Inadequate instruction due to...
- ▶ Inadequate enforcement of procedures due to...
- ▶ Correct equipment wasn't where it was needed due to...
- ▶ Inadequate induction due to...
- ▶ Poor hazard identification and analysis due to...
- ▶ Controls for identified hazards were not effective due to...
- ▶ Substandard equipment due to...

10. Analyse the findings and record what caused the damage or harm, what the injuries were and how extensive. Also record the **immediate causes**, such as a faulty guard or equipment, and **underlying causes**, such as the failure to check the guard or a lack of training to ensure it was in place.

11. Establish methods of control to rectify and prevent recurrence, such as who does what by when, including the following:

- ▶ Immediate short-term steps so no one else gets injured or nothing else is damaged
- ▶ Long-term steps to stop it happening again
- ▶ Management controls – training and supervision
- ▶ Local controls – such as fixing the guard, establishing regular checking systems.

12. Record all details, findings and action taken on the Accident Report form, and record the hazards and their controls on the Hazard Identification form.

13. Communicate findings and solutions to the injured person and the Health and Safety Manager, who will then tell any other relevant person/s.

14. Close out and follow up to ensure recommendations have been made, new controls are in place, effective training has been conducted, and staff understand the new controls or duties.

Remember: Accidents are unfortunate, but learning nothing from them is unforgivable.

Also see: The **19-Step Accident Investigation Methodology flowchart** on www.safetree.nz