

MCOE Injury and Illness Prevention Program

Appendix A (Accident Investigations) of Part 5 (Accident and Exposure Investigation) to the Merced County Office of Education Injury and Illness Prevention Program

PURPOSE

The biggest reason for performing injury investigations is to prevent recurrence. That is why it is very important to find the contributing and root causes of the injury so appropriate corrective action can be taken.

DEFINITIONS

Accident: An undesired or unplanned event that interrupts the normal course of events that may or may not result in bodily harm to person (s) or damage to property. Accidents are further categorized as follows:

- a. **Injury:** Any injury such as a cut, fracture, or sprain that results from a single incident regardless how minor the injury.
- b. **Illness:** Any abnormal condition or disorder resulting from other than a single incident caused by exposure to environmental factors. Examples would be skin diseases, respiratory conditions, or musculoskeletal disorders such as carpal tunnel syndrome.
- c. **Near miss:** Any accident where the potential for injury or damage is present but didn't occur. Near misses represent "warnings" of hazardous conditions, behaviors, or procedures. For example, an employee slips on a wet spot on the ground but does not get hurt.

Root Cause: This is the actual event that resulted in the injury or damage. A root cause would be the lack of training in a lifting accident. Failure to request assistance would be a "contributing cause" but the fact that the employee was never trained in the first place is the root cause. Fixing contributing causes but not root causes can potentially result in the accident reoccurring. For example: A warning to watch where you walk to an employee who fell down instead of fixing the loose carpet leaves the actual hazard uncorrected.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Assistant Superintendents/Directors:

- a. Ensure that supervisors are familiar with their responsibilities of this Appendix.
- b. Review any accident/incident reports that result in a injury requiring medical treatment.

Supervisors:

- a. Upon notification of an accident initiate the accident investigation process by ensuring the employee(s) involved complete the appropriate accident/incident report form.
- b. Request assistance from the OHS Analyst, as necessary, to conduct the investigation and complete the report form.

OHS Analyst:

- a. Establish tracking process to verify completion of the accident/incident investigations and to initiate follow-up as necessary on corrective actions.
- b. Assist supervisors conducting the investigations.
- c. Maintain records of the investigations and corrective actions.

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PROCEDURES

1. When performing the investigation, remember to fact find not fault find. Try to be objective and supportive when interviewing the employee (s). Take the viewpoint that this is an opportunity for preventing recurrence by correcting the contributing causes.
2. Guidance for completing Part II, Supervisor's portion of the Employee Injury Report Form.

Working within his/her job description - Is the employee performing the duties specified in the job description or performing other duties ie; Utility worker performing maintenance tasks or an Instructional Aide as a driver.

What caused the accident - To prevent recurrence it is extremely important to find the root cause. Ask "why" questions and try to determine exactly why the incident happened. One "why" question generally will lead to another. A key point is not stopping at "I didn't use the safety glasses" but determining why he/she didn't. Not following procedures or common work practices in doing a task may not always be because the individual choose not to. Is the individual trained how? Is the individual directed to? Has the procedure been previously enforced?

The information you find out by asking "why" will assist in determining the proper corrective action. For example: Let's say an employee injures his/her back while moving something. Some "why" questions might be: Why weren't you using a dolly? Why were you lifting so much? Have you been trained? Why didn't you get help? Another example: One of your teachers' steps on a chair, which was on top of a table, to hang student art on the wall. Why weren't you using an approved ladder or step stool?

Describe immediate corrective action - This is going to be what is done right away to prevent further injury or recurrence. Cleaning up spills that caused somebody to slip and fall; training or remedial training to perform the task correctly; removing broken equipment; verbal or written reprimand or other disciplinary action in accordance with MCOE Policy 3031. Most immediate corrective action takes place within 24 hrs. Specify date action completed and by whom.

Describe long term corrective action - This might be adding a written policy or a change to a written procedure; purchasing of equipment; scheduling training for a later date; submitting a work order. Specify date action completed and by whom.