

TITLE: INCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING	
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PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines on incident investigation and use of an incident investigation report form.

Causes of incidents are rarely simple when circumstances are examined, as with many incidents there are numerous contributing factors.

The focus on incident investigation should be on system deficiencies, in preference to human factors.

SCOPE:

This Guideline applies to:

- Lifesavers, patrol captains/club captains and team leaders
- Lifeguards and lifeguard supervisors
- Coastal authorities and managers

GUIDELINE DESCRIPTION:

1.0 General

1.1 The main aim of investigating incidents is to:

- identify those factors and causes that can be most effectively acted upon to prevent recurrences;
- prevent similar incidents recurring in the future;
- identify any new hazards;
- identify and choose suitable controls; and
- reduce the cost:
 - in pain, suffering, disruption to work and loss of earnings of injured workers; and
 - of incidents to the organisation.

1.2 Therefore, the circumstances and causes of all incidents should be investigated fully and accurately.

1.3 The investigation is not aimed at attributing or apportioning blame.

2.0 When to investigate

2.1 An investigation should occur as soon as possible. The less time between an incident and the investigation, the more accurate the information that can be obtained.

2.2 Concern for an injured worker should take precedence over everything else — when incidents involving injury or illness occur, early investigation is essential.

3.0 What to investigate

An investigation should occur when any moderate/major injury, damage to equipment or potentially moderate/major near-miss occurs in the lifesaving operational environment.

4.0 How to conduct an investigation

- 4.1 The causes and results of any incident should be investigated objectively. For example:
- The investigator should begin the investigation with an open mind.
 - No assumptions should be made and any judgement should be based on information that is known to be full and accurate.
 - Open-ended questions should be asked, and words not put into witnesses' mouths.
 - There should be no blame apportioned to people.
 - The importance of seeking the reasons for the incident to prevent a recurrence should be emphasised.
 - An investigation may require photographs, sketches or another's technical expertise before the final causes of an incident can be determined and adequate controls considered and chosen.
- 4.2 When commencing the investigation:
- a. Make sure any injured person is given appropriate medical attention without delay.
 - b. Control the incident scene, place barriers, turn power off, etc.
 - c. Commence the investigation as quickly as possible.
- 4.3 Conduct interviews at the scene of the incident if possible.
- a. Ensure that the witnesses discuss the incident in relative privacy. Begin with those who can contribute most.
 - b. On completion of each interview, repeat the witness' statement as you understand it to ensure that you have correctly understood.
- 4.4 Key questions to ask
- a. Who? Get the names of everyone involved, near, present or aware of possible contributing factors.
 - b. What? Describe materials and equipment involved, check for defects, get an exact description of chemicals involved, etc.
 - c. Where? Describe exact location, note all relevant facts, i.e. lighting, weather, surface conditions, etc.
 - d. When? Note exact time, date and other factors, i.e. shift change, work cycle, break period, etc.
 - e. How? Describe usual sequence of events and actual sequence of events before, during and after the incident.
 - f. Why? Find all possible direct and indirect causes AND how to keep it from happening again.
- 4.5 Take immediate corrective action where warranted.
- 4.6 Complete report with recommendations.
- 4.7 Ensure follow-up action occurs.

DEFINITIONS:

Investigation means 'to examine in detail with care and accuracy'.

REFERENCES:

Australian Coastal Public Safety Guidelines

- LS1471: Incident reporting, recording and investigation

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1. Incident Investigation Report Form (sample)

APPENDIX 1. – Incident Investigation Report Form (sample)

Incident Investigation Report

Important Notes

- ✓ The completed form is to be attached to the related Incident Report Form.
- ✓ Please print clearly.
- ✓ Please attach additional information if space is not sufficient.

Venue name and address:

Date of Incident: ____/____/____ Time of incident: ____ am/pm

Description of Incident

Personal Injury Property Damage Near Miss

Incident Reports

Was an Incident Report completed? Yes or No

If yes, by whom:

Name (_____) Contact telephone

Has a copy of the Report been sighted? Yes or No

Witness(s)

Were there any witnesses to the incident? Yes or No

If yes; Name(s): _____

Contact telephone number(s): _____

What was the person or persons doing at the time?

How exactly was the injury, disease or damaged sustained?

What happened unexpectedly?

Contributing Factors (Include any particular chemical, product, process, equipment involved)

Corrective/Action Taken Since the Incident

Further Corrective/Remedial Action Recommended

Estimated Costs

Estimated Cost of Incident: \$ _____

Estimated Cost of Correction: \$ _____

Venue Management's Comments

Investigating Officer: _____
Name

_____ *Position*

_____ *Signature*

_____/_____/_____
Date

Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Safety

SECTION 9