

Xchanging Safety Sheet

Number 104

Incident Reporting and Investigation

Legislative Requirements

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

What are the problems?

Incidents and accidents that are not adequately investigated can lead to the following problems:

- Important hazards may be overlooked or ignored
- There may be a breach of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Difficulties may arise if a workers compensation claim is made.

Some Definitions

Accident	A sudden event leading to injury or death of a person. All accidents are, in principle, preventable.
Hazard	A source or situation with a potential for harm of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, damage to the environment, or a combination of these. A source of uncontrolled energy.
Incident	Any unplanned event resulting in or having a potential for injury, ill-health, damage or other loss.
Near Miss	Incidents with no visible injury or damage.

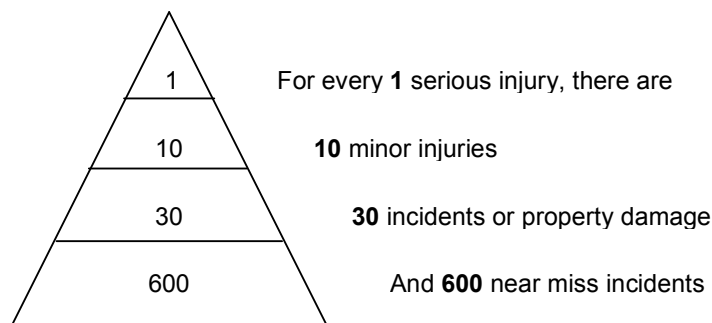
Employer Responsibility

From July 2008 to June 2009:

- Almost 30,000 injuries reported to the Victorian WorkCover Authority
- 27 people died while at work in Victoria.

An estimated 3,000 Australians die each year of work-related cancers.

All these injuries and diseases could have been prevented. To prevent death and injury, we must record and control incidents and 'near misses'.



If accidents, incidents and 'near misses' are not investigated and the lessons from them added to the 'corporate memory', costs will rise, injury and disease will continue to occur and legal cases may follow.

In Victoria, it is mandatory to report certain accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences (OHS Act 2004, sect 37-39). These matters must be reported immediately Ph. 13 23 60 and in writing within 48 hours. Sites of reportable incidents must not be disturbed (except for rescuing people & ensuring site is safe) until a WorkSafe Inspector says they can be disturbed.

Notifiable Incidents

- Death of a person
- A person needing medical treatment for:
 - Amputation
 - Electric shock
 - Serious head injury
 - Serious eye injury
 - Serious laceration
 - Separation of skin from underlying tissue
- Spinal injury
- Loss of bodily function: sight, hearing, balance or going unconscious
- A person requiring medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance
- A person requiring immediate treatment as a hospital in-patient.

Notifiable occurrences:

- Collapse, overturning, failure, malfunction or damage to mechanical plant
- Collapse, failure of an excavation or its shoring
- Collapse of part of a building or structure
- Implosion, explosion or fire
- Escape, spillage or leakage of a Dangerous Good
- Fall or release from a height of any mechanical Plant, substance or object
- In a mine: inrush of water, mud or gas OR interruption of ventilation

Recommended Strategies

Identify The procedures necessary for incident investigation

Assess All incidents and accidents – see Xchanging Sample Accident and Incident Investigation form

Control The potential for incidents occurring again by applying the hierarchy of OHS controls

Review The effectiveness of implemented control measures, and determine if any modifications to the controls are necessary.

Hierarchy of Controls

Elimination

Can some hazardous process be eliminated?

Substitution

Can a safer process be used?

Engineering controls

Can hazardous systems be isolated, guarded or automated using some type of reliable mechanism?

Administrative controls

Is appropriate supervision, training or signage needed and how should this be done?

Personal protective equipment and clothing

Should goggles, helmets, gloves, safety shoes or earmuffs be used?

Checklist for Incident Recording and Investigation

If you answer “No” for any of the suggestions, below, take action to strengthen your ability to prevent accidents, incidents and near misses occurring again.

Question	Yes	No – needs attention
The company has a system for reporting hazards		
Employees are encouraged to notify hazards, eg using a hazard register or notification form		
Employees have been trained and encouraged to use the company’s formal system of reporting hazards, incidents and ‘near misses’		
Employees always receive feedback on progress in addressing hazards and risks they have identified		
Accident reports are communicated to relevant employees, so they can take preventative action		
Records of all ‘near misses’, incidents and accidents are regularly reviewed by senior management with a view to modifying management systems		
Those investigating ‘near misses’, incidents and accidents are trained in these procedures		
Those investigating consult all relevant staff, with a view to determining factors contributing to the ‘near miss’, incident or accident and NOT to blame anyone		
Investigations always identify hazards, assess the risks of those hazards and recommend controls, preferring the higher levels in the hierarchy of controls to the lower levels		
The scope of investigations always includes assessing the role of management systems and procedures with accidents and incidents		
Recommendations from investigations of ‘near misses’, incidents and accidents are attended to promptly, and feedback given to those involved in the investigation on progress		
Senior management regularly reviews reports of hazards and investigations		

Record all accidents and incidents using the Xchanging Incident Record Form or equivalent. Investigate all incidents and accidents using the Xchanging Sample investigation form or equivalent.

Services Available

Xchanging can provide you with advice and assist you with the following services:

- Accident and Investigation Training (managers, supervisors and staff)
- Develop and implement policies and procedures.

Please contact the OHS Consultants at risk.management@au.xchanging.com for further information.