Accident Reporting and Investigation

Accidents are events which interrupt the smooth flow of profitable production or service. Accidents and injuries are not the same in that not all accidents result in injuries. Timely reporting of accidents and injuries enables responsive medical care to the injured and begins the process of discovering what happened and, most importantly, how to prevent similar accidents from occurring in the future.

A productive accident investigation prevents future operational breakdowns, identifies better methods, pinpoints training needs, shows concern to all employees and adds knowledge to the organization.

We investigate accidents/incidents to improve employee safety and health by minimizing or eliminating recurrence, discovering causes of work stoppage and eliminating or controlling identified causes.

All accidents should be investigated, but the depth of the investigation may be determined by the severity of the accident or the number of personnel exposed. It is best to begin the investigation immediately, during the same shift. Investigations should include a visit to the accident scene. The individual investigating the scene depends on the culture of the organization. Suggested personnel include: maintenance, nursing, supervision, safety committee, etc.

Total accident costs are a summation of direct costs, such as medical bills and damage to equipment, and indirect costs, sometimes referred to as hidden costs. Indirect costs have been estimated to be as much as four times the direct cost.

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\text{TOTAL ACCIDENT COSTS} = \text{DIRECT COSTS} + \text{INDIRECT COSTS}
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Direct cost is medical and indemnity (insured)
Indirect cost is non-productive (uninsured)

**DIRECT COSTS**
- Medical
- Compensation

**INDIRECT COSTS**
- Lost work time by injured party
- Lost earning power by injured party
- Economic loss to injured party’s family
- Lost work time by fellow workers
- Cost of training a replacement worker