

HARBOR-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

POLICY NO. 429

PURPOSE:

To provide guidance to supervisors and managers responsible for investigating accidents and initiating corrective actions to reduce or eliminate future accident risks.

POLICY:

At Harbor UCLA Medical Center, all supervisors, managers and/or charge person are responsible for investigating the circumstances of all accidents, and for taking efforts to eliminate or reduce future risks.

PROCEDURE:

All supervisors, managers and/or charge person are responsible for:

A. General Guidelines

Successful accident prevention requires the following **four** fundamental activities:

1. Study all working areas to detect, eliminate or control physical and environmental hazards that may contribute to an accident.
2. Study all operating methods and practices to implement and/or ensure best practices.
3. Use education, instruction training, and discipline to minimize human factors that contribute to accidents.
4. Conduct a thorough investigation of every accident that results in a disabling injury or Occupational Safety & Health Administration lost workday to determine contributing circumstances. Accidents that do not result in personal injury, near-accidents or near misses, are warnings for further learning.

B. Why Investigate Accidents?

1. To prevent further accidents in the future. Nearly every accident offers the possibility of preventing a future accident. It is to your advantage to examine each accident, find the cause, and correct the situation as soon as possible.
2. To publicize the particular hazard among employees and their supervisors, thereby directing attention to accident prevention in general.
3. To determine facts bearing on legal liability.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 9/85

SUPERSEDES:

REVISED: 3/99, 1/02, 8/11, 10/14, 3/18

REVIEWED: 9/89, 10/92, 2/96, 3/99, 1/02, 2/05, 1/08, 10/14, 3/18

REVIEWED COMMITTEE: N/A

APPROVED BY:

Kim McKenzie, RN, MSN, CPHQ
Chief Executive Officer

Anish Mahajan, MD
Chief Medical Officer

Patricia Soltero Sanchez, RN, BSN, MAOM
Chief Nursing Officer

Signature(s) on File.

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C. How to Investigate Accidents?

The following procedures have been found effective when investigating accidents:

1. Go the scene of the accident promptly.
2. Talk with the injured person. If possible, talk with witnesses. Stress getting the facts, not placing responsibility or blame.
3. Listen for clues in conversation. Unsolicited comments often have merit.
4. Encourage people to give their ideas for preventing the accident.
5. Study possible causes, both unsafe conditions and unsafe practices.
6. Confer with interested persons about possible solutions. The problem may have been solved by someone else.
7. Write a report using a printed form that allows a narrative description.
8. Follow-up to ensure conditions are corrected. If they cannot be corrected immediately, report this to all concerned.
9. Publicize any corrective action taken so that all may benefit from the experience.
10. Keep in mind that:
 - Most accidents involve both unsafe acts and unsafe conditions.
 - The purpose of accident investigation is to prevent future accidents and not to place blame
 - Educate immediately when possible (on the spot) to avoid reoccurrences.

D. What Are The Key Facts In Accidents?

1. **Nature of Injury:** What was the injury?
2. **Part of Body:** What part of the body was affected by the injury?
3. **Source of Injury:** What object, substance exposure, or bodily motion inflicted the injury?
4. **Accident Type:** How did the injured person come in contact with the object, substance, or exposure?
5. **Hazardous Conditions:** What hazardous, physical or environmental condition or circumstance caused or permitted the occurrence of the event.
6. **Unsafe Act:** What unsafe act of a person caused or permitted the occurrence of the event?

E. Report

The most comprehensive, accurate investigation could be a useless exercise if you don't complete an accident investigation report. The report leads to corrective action.

To be effective, it should be simple, concise and informative. It should indicate logical preventive action with a minimum of lost time and motion. The basic facts covered are:

1. **The Accident:** What happened? What could have happened? (Include D-Section)
2. **Causes:** What was the primary cause? What were the secondary causes? Were there other possible causes, conditions or acts that could have but did not cause the accident?
3. **Preventive Action:** What has been done or should be done to prevent a recurrence? (Include training or retraining, keep your sign-in sheets for verification).

F. Safety Office & Human Resources

The Environmental Safety Officer and Environment of Care Committee will periodically review a summary of these incidents to see what injuries are occurring and in what numbers. Patterns of repeat situations will be noted and corrective actions suggested.

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REFERENCES:

DHS Policy No. 901 Injury and Illness Prevention Program

DHS Policy No. 910 Safety Program.

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Policy No. 448 Injury and Illness Prevention Program.