



## INSTRUCTIONS

# SAMPLE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

### Accident/Incident Investigations Are Required

Under Minnesota AWAIR (A Workplace Accident and Injury Reduction) program standards, organizations are required to investigate workplace accidents to determine causes, take corrective actions and prevent future accidents. The depth and quality of these investigations varies greatly depending on the circumstances of the organization and severity of the accident.

The Accident/Incident Investigation Report seeks to improve the quality of accident/incident investigations by prompting supervisors, department heads and others to ask applicable questions and determine the root causes of the incident. The report also seeks to provide information when filing a workers' compensation claim and provide claim representatives with necessary information to process claims more efficiently.

If an employee is injured or if injury could result from the incident (e.g., a bee sting or tick bite), the first half of this report can be used to populate the first report of injury (FROI) when submitting the claim to MCIT in a timely manner. MCIT recommends members submit this information as soon after the injury as possible. The remainder of the report can then be used to further the accident investigation.

If the employee is not injured and the incident is considered a near miss, use this report starting at the "Where did the incident occur?" question. Answering that and the following questions helps provide information to discover the underlying causes of the incident and aid in developing corrective action to mitigate similar incidents in the future.

When gathering information, always remember that the goal of the investigation is to determine what happened to prevent it from happening again; *it is not to find fault or blame.*

### The Report Form

#### Nonpublic Employee Data (shaded box)

Most of the information within the shaded area is required when filing a workers' compensation claim. This specific information can also be considered nonpublic data and care should be given to who sees this data.

If a safety committee or other nonauthorized person reviews information from this form, the *data in the shaded area should be redacted before sharing.* Although it is necessary for processing the claim, it is not necessary for reviewing the incident and determining cause(s).

#### Description of Injury

Be as specific as possible when filling out this section. The more accurate the information that can be provided to the workers' compensation representative, the better the claim can be processed and the injured individual given informed care.

When asking questions about the accident, pay attention to the mechanics of the injury: What was the body doing leading up to the moment of injury? Could there be other possible sites of injury other than the obvious?

#### Where did the injury occur?

Detail the precise location of the injury. Examination of the area may also uncover potential contributing causes to the incident.

#### How did the incident occur?

The incident should be broken down in sequential detail. It is important to gather this information as soon as possible because memories fade and details may be lost.

### **What unsafe conditions or acts contributed to the incident?**

When investigating, consider the environment. Did noise, weather, poor housekeeping, unguarded machinery, misused or unused personal protective equipment, inappropriate shoes or other conditions contribute to the incident? Was the employee rushed, taking a shortcut, not paying attention, not adequately trained or act in a manner that contributed to the incident?

### **Who are the witnesses to the incident?**

Were there others nearby and what did they see? Witnesses should be interviewed as soon as possible to get their description of the incident.

### **Have similar incidents like this occurred in the past?**

This may take more time to research but it is important to know if similar incidents have previously occurred and if measures were put in place to try to reduce them.

### **What is the root cause(s) of the incident?**

With the information gathered from the previous questions, analysis can begin. Are there underlying factors that contributed to the incident beyond what was discovered? Unless the root cause(s) can be found, the potential for a future similar incident remains. There are a number of ways to try to determine root cause, but one of the easiest is called the "five whys."

To demonstrate this technique, consider an accident where a highway employee is burned adding a block of tar to a tar pot:

1. Ask "why did the employee get burned?" Hot tar splashed up onto his hands.
2. "Why did the hot tar splash up onto his hands?" He wasn't wearing protective gloves.
3. "Why wasn't he wearing protective gloves?" They are uncomfortable and are difficult to wear.
4. "Why are they uncomfortable?" They are the only ones available and come in only one size.
5. Further questioning might discover that the employee didn't feel comfortable going to his supervisor about finding a better fitting glove or that he wasn't aware of other gloves available, both could be addressed by better communication and training.

### **Given the root cause(s), what can be done to prevent a recurrence of this type of incident?**

After identifying the root cause or causes, the supervisor should then make a plan of how to prevent future injuries from occurring. This plan should include steps and give clear responsibilities of who would be responsible for completing the corrective actions. This process may also include the department head or other employees and their feedback.

### **Rest of the form, records retention**

The remainder of the report form helps to track the corrective action plan and ensure follow up. This will vary from one organization to another.

If not used currently, consider utilizing the safety committee in this process. The safety committee can be invaluable when reviewing incidents and giving feedback on corrective action.

Given proper consideration to the nonpublic data, this report should be retained to show the accident/incident investigation process is satisfying the requirements set forth in the AWAIR program.

### **Contact MCIT for More Information**

For more information concerning accident/incident investigations, MCIT members should contact their loss control consultant at **1.800.209.6400**.