

Risk control services—the incident review

THE INCIDENT REVIEW

One of the best ways to make sure an incident doesn't happen again

The incident review is a quality assessment of your safety and claims management process. It is one of the most effective methods used to identify the cause of an employee's injury, as well as uncover weakness and inconsistency that may exist in a company's approach to managing its workers compensation and safety program. A thorough incident review will reduce the number of employee injuries while controlling and reducing workers compensation costs. Incident reviews are not intended to identify fault or assign blame. The review should remain positive, with an emphasis on total process improvement.

The incident review is a way to demonstrate your company's commitment to employee safety. It is not a part of the formal incident investigation process. The investigation and resulting countermeasures should be completed and/or implemented prior to the incident review. During the incident review, the participants will look at the entire event from the activities leading up to the incident, the actual incident, the response and medical care that was provided and the countermeasures that were developed.

The incident review is simple to administer, but it does require some preparation. It is not a requirement that all incidents be reviewed, but each incident review will yield valuable information about a company's safety and claims management programs. The first step is to select the specific incidents to be reviewed. The incidents may be selected based upon severity, type, department, operation or any other predetermined reason.

Scheduling and advanced notification of the participants are the next steps. At least one to three days notification should be provided. The success of the incident review is dependent upon information gathering, frank discussion and input from each participant. The participants should not feel threatened or intimidated by the review.

The first report of injury, or incident report, should be available for the review. Other documents that can help with the review include written work practices and policies and a job description, if they are available.

A suggested agenda is as follows:

1. Introduction (if necessary).
2. Purpose of the review—improvement in safety and consistent workers compensation management.
3. Verify employee description of the incident, including treatment and outcome (let the employee tell their story).
4. Discussion about the causes of the incident (equipment, procedures/consistency, maintenance, training, isolated situation, etc.).
5. Incident prevention plan development with responsibilities.
6. Treatment and outcome discussion (successes and needed improvements). The discussion should remain general and not specific to an employee's individual medical condition.
7. Brief discussion, including any other safety concerns.

When closing the meeting, be sure to thank the participants for their time. Document and track any outstanding action items.

The information contained in this service bulletin was obtained from reliable sources. However, United Fire Group accepts no legal responsibility for the correctness or completeness of this information.

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OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

The reviews should take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes. They are best conducted in a small, formal conference room, away from the distractions of work and eavesdropping co-workers. To be effective, the incident review requires the participation of the injured worker, their immediate supervisor and a corporate decision maker such as a plant manager, director, vice president or owner(s). All persons with authority to make decisions and create change in the organization should be present.

By meeting with the injured worker, their supervisor and the department manager, all issues can be addressed, questions about policy and procedures can be answered and changes can be implemented immediately. This format strengthens communication and increases safety awareness between all levels of the organization. Remember, incident reviews are not intended to identify fault or assign blame. The goal is to identify any causes of the incident and institute the changes necessary to ensure the cause does not happen again.

The incident review should remain positive. When the procedure is utilized properly, accident frequency will decrease through the development and implementation of effective corrective actions. Also, instances of malingering and/or prefabricated injury claims can be reduced.

The objective of the incident review is to ensure the incident does not happen again. Specific itemized improvements will be assigned to participants during the review. If necessary, the improvements and changes can be tracked on a spreadsheet to ensure all action items are completed.

INCIDENT REVIEW BENEFITS:

- Causes loss prevention to become more proactive.
- Involves management and employee (injured worker).
- Reduces accidents and incidents.
- Results in lower workers compensation cost.
- Increases accountability (employee, supervisor and manager).
- Highlights accident cause(s).
- Provides understanding of accident response.
- Identifies issues pertaining to treatment of your injured worker.
- Management demonstrates high priority to accidents and injuries.
- Improves employee relations.
- Increases employee interest in safety.
- Helps identify production and procedural improvements.
- Helps identify quality improvements.
- Challenges supervisors and managers to prevent repeat incidents.
- Causes employees to think about injury prevention/accident elimination.
- Identifies hazards within the workplace.
- Draws employees into the safety program and loss reduction process.

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