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| ACCIDENT / SENTINEL EVENT INVESTIGATION | | | | NO. 477 | |
| The purpose of an accident / sentinel event investigation is to prevent similar losses from occurring in the future. It is unfortunate when a loss occurs a first time, but it is intolerable if that loss occurs again. For accident investigation efforts to be worthwhile, we must have the philosophy that losses are preventable, and can be avoided through aggressive Administrative measures.  By developing an awareness of hazardous situations, management personnel can better identify and prevent losses. Other benefits of a thorough investigation include: A demonstration of a facility's commitment toward providing a safe work environment, provides valuable data for physicians and claims processing, and can deliver a facility more support if legislation becomes an issue. This documentation is also referred to for accurate completion of required forms or reports, such as the OSHA 300.  An accident is a series of events that takes place and cause the undesirable loss. The elimination of these events will prevent adverse situation from occurring. Therefore, it is vital that those investigating the accident identify situations which caused the mishap, and not just settle for concluding "employee error." To maintain a quality safety environment, accidents and close calls will be investigated.  TECHNIQUE  The initial investigation will be done by the supervisor, administration and/or Assistant Administrator immediately after the victim has been properly cared for, authorities or the main office notified if necessary, and there is no more threat of injury or property damage. Investigation forms should be filled out completely, from interviews with the victim, witnesses, and the supervisor's own account of the situation. Continual reinforcement may be needed to let those involved know that the purpose of the interviews is not to place fault, but simply to prevent reoccurrence and comply with company policy.  Completion of a thorough accident form should include:  **Names, Date, Location and Identification:** Names of affected persons and necessary means of identification should be completed (such as social security, company, shift, etc.). It is also necessary to have an accurate date and time of the incident.  **Description of Accident:** Specific and honest sequence of events involved is essential for an accurate analysis to be completed. This description does not need to be lengthy, but must contain adequate information to describe occurring situations which lead to the accident. Photographs are always beneficial to help retain evidence and recall facts. | | | | | |
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| ACCIDENT / SENTINEL EVENT INVESTIGATION, continued | | | | NO. 477 | |
| **Accident Causes - Unsafe Acts and Unsafe Conditions:** *Unsafe Acts* are the human element of the accident. It is estimated that about 98% of accidents have an unsafe act (human element) as a contributing cause. Examples include:  - Disregard of safety instructions because feels unimportant or too much of a hassle (unsafe lifting, did not wear eye protection, did not use tools properly, running, etc.)  - Worker unaware of hazard since not provided adequate or clear training (breathe chemical vapors, not qualified to use equipment, unaware of rules, etc.)  *Unsafe Conditions* are the physical elements of accidents involving tools, equipment, materials or facilities. Examples include:  - Hazardous environment (wet or icy floor, poor lighting, bad weather, uneven walking surface, inadequate ventilation, unprotected floor opening, etc.)  - Defective Tools or Equipment (ladders, scaffolds, planks, ungrounded power tools, mechanical failures, missing guards, bad electrical cords, cracked handles, etc.)  **Corrective Action Needed or Taken:** This portion of the form can be accurately developed if the facts describing the accident and contributing causes are thorough. The corrective action taken should make management feel the accident will not reoccur. This may include upgrading training efforts (including retraining and/or return demonstrations), more detailed work place inspections, different type of PPE, motivation techniques to ensure workers follow established rules, or upgrading tools and equipment.  REVIEW  Once the accident investigation form has been completed, a specific review is needed to verify that the description and causes of the accident are accurate, and that the proper corrective action is taken. This should involve Management, the Safety Coordinator, or Safety Committee. The more a loss can be reviewed, the better the likelihood the solution will be implemented. This will also help to track loss trends so focused attention can be provided where needed.  IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP  Once the preferred solution for corrective action has been identified, the next step is to effectively implement the method which will reduce the chance for reoccurrence. The most detailed and concluded accident report is worthless if it is not put into action. It must be decided who has the responsibility to implement the corrective measures, and how those measures will be monitored to ensure they are being applied. A time frame should be placed on when specific activities are to be implemented. | | | | | |
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