

Be Ready to Act - Investigation

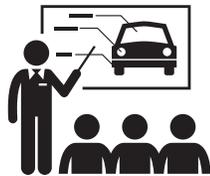
Successful investigations require planning and preparation. To be ready to act quickly and effectively, have established processes with clearly defined roles and responsibilities assigned to specific people.

Have an Emergency Response Plan

If anybody is injured in the crash, it is critical to have a process that quickly mobilizes emergency resources to the scene. Drivers and passengers must know what to do if they are involved in a crash. Others in the company - emergency responders, managers, supervisors and the people who will take part in the investigation - need to know their role. Decide on the actions, and who will do them. Write it down. Communicate it widely, and make it readily accessible. Provide employees with necessary training and resources so they can reliably deliver on their responsibilities.



Having an emergency response system that works is so important that many companies regularly use “mock incidents” to practice their system. Doing so helps responders learn their roles and rehearse the actions they will take. Testing your response system helps identify gaps you can fix before a real incident occurs. Make sure your organization has an effective emergency response system so that employees involved in a crash get the help they need as soon as possible.



Know the Reporting Requirements

Depending on the circumstances and consequences, there are legal requirements for reporting incidents to the police, the insurance company, the MOL, ESDC and or WSIB. Establish in advance who will make those reports.



Set clear criteria for reporting incidents internally. For example, a company might set the following thresholds:

1. All incidents that involve a company-owned vehicle(s) or an employee-owned vehicle(s) used for work must be immediately reported to the supervisor.
2. Crashes in which anybody is injured must be immediately reported to a senior manager.

Make sure your contractors and sub-contractors are clear on their reporting duties.

Have a Notification Procedure

If an employee is injured in a crash, family members, co-workers, clients and customers may be concerned and want to know what happened. The media may have questions. Know what information the company will share and who will assemble and communicate those facts. Notes or well-worded scripts will help communicate sensitive messages.



Create a Policy

The management team working with the safety committee should develop a policy that describes the kinds of crashes the company will investigate, and the scope of those investigations.

Below is an example of how your organization might word its investigation policy.



Example Investigation Policy

[insert company name] will investigate:

- all motor vehicle incidents involving company-owned or employee-owned vehicles used for work purposes, and
- near misses with potential for serious harm. Investigations will focus on:
 - identifying basic causes - learning why the incident or near miss occurred,
 - determining what can be done to overcome those causes, and
 - recommending actions (how) to prevent similar incidents or near misses.

Set realistic investigation thresholds based on available resources. For example, if the organization does not have enough time or people to investigate every MVI, it might decide to thoroughly investigate incidents that resulted in - or had potential to result in - an injury to someone or property damage of more than \$10,000.

Know Who Will Gather Crash Site Information

If they intend to investigate a crash, managers need to quickly know how they will get necessary information. Can an employee at the scene gather it? Or, should they send a company representative - a manager or other employee with necessary skills and tools, or perhaps a qualified third party?



Identify Who Will Participate in Investigations

A big part of an effective investigation is mobilizing it as soon as possible. To do that, the organization should identify who will participate in investigations before a crash occurs.



Build a team that has the right expertise and includes:

- someone who has incident investigation training and knows how to apply the process and tools.
- someone familiar with the driving your employees do and who will offer practical perspectives, questions and ideas (e.g., a supervisor knows the work, and can act quickly to implement key recommendations).
- a management representative who understands the business and its interests.
- a member of the joint health and safety committee, or a worker representative.

Not all incidents require the same time and resources. One or two people can investigate minor incidents. Crashes that result in fatalities, serious injuries or significant property or environmental damage deserve greater diligence. You might want to engage the specialized skills of an external investigator or a Collision Analyst.



Ensure employees who will participate in investigations have the training necessary to fulfill their roles. And, because crashes never happen at a convenient time, have a back-up person for each role in case a member of the investigation team is unavailable.