

## **Responding to On-the-Job Injuries**

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Even the best occupational safety and health systems (OSH) cannot conceivably prevent all accidents or dangerous occurrences at work as the very definitions of these events note that they are unplanned and unwanted. Accidents are unplanned, unwanted events which result in injury, illness or loss to the company, while a dangerous occurrence is an unplanned, unwanted event which could have resulted in personal injury, illness or a loss to the company. The Accident and Occupational Diseases Notification Act Cap 338 includes provisions which are meant to guide the process of reporting workplace accidents and dangerous occurrences. The law dictates that “where any accident arising out of and in the course of employment” results in a fatality or any worker being disabled for 3 days or more, there is a need for the Chief Labour Officer (CLO) to be notified.

However, having an internal policy for the handling of these events is highly recommended; subject to the provisions of the Act of course. Establishing and enforcing a policy can aid your organization and by extension your employees in building and maintaining proper safety and health standards and practices. The TIIARA process identifies points of action which should generally guide your response to accidents and injuries at work and by extension any policy being written to inform such:

### TIIARA

- 1) Treat
- 2) Inform
- 3) Investigate
- 4) Analyze
- 5) Report
- 6) Act

The process, once followed, allows for the needs of all parties involved to be met and for learning to come from each accident. The system aids in may be implemented to reduce and/or prevent recurrence.

### **TREAT**

The victim must be treated immediately in any accident or dangerous occurrence; this of course requires skills and resources. If these skills and resources are not present, they need to be quickly supplied in the event of a serious accident, as the victim may require treatment from a medical professional. The physical comfort and safety of the victim is paramount and a medical professional should be consulted if the accident or the effects of it may be considered to be severe.

### **INFORM**

The necessary parties should be informed as soon as possible, these include but are not limited to: management, family of the victim and regulatory authorities. Any organizational policy speaking to the process of accident or occurrence reporting should outline which party (ies) should be notified dependent on the scale of the accident.

### **INVESTIGATE**

Examining the circumstances surrounding the accident should be the next step. It is important to look at the causes contributing to the accident. It is wise, dependent on the nature of your business and the scale of the accident, to have a trained Safety and Health professional conduct any such investigation. Establishing the sequence of events leading up to the accident is key to identifying what preventative measures could be used in the future.

### **ANALYZE**

Analysis should always be done with a view to understanding a few things: what happened, who was involved, why the activity was done and was it done in the prescribe manner. These and other questions will clearly identify the root cause and any other relevant contributory factors which may have led to the accident or dangerous occurrence. The findings should be

compiled in a report which should entail background, findings and S.M.A.R.T (*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound*) recommendations. Your policy should identify who should be privy to this report, suggested parties are: the joint safety and health committee or staff safety delegate and management.

## **ACT**

Action following the accident should be based on the recommendations, following employee consultations, so as to ensure employee buy-in. No definitive changes to safety policies or procedure should be made without a documented reliable report.

Establishing and implementing a reliable reporting process can result in advantageous effects for any organization, large or small. What is equally important however, is ensuring that members of staff regardless of their position within the company are familiar with the policy and procedures and are prepared for any accident or dangerous occurrence.