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Accident Investigation

Accident and incident investigation form an essential part of occupational and environmental health and safety (OHS). Workplace accident and incident investigations provide an organisation with a deeper understanding of the risks associated with its work activities. Well-thought-out hazard and risk management, combined with adequate supervision, will ensure that the organisation's work activities are safe. Health and safety investigations are an important tool in developing and refining OHS risk assessment and management systems.

THE Applus+ SOLUTION

The expert services at Applus+ offer a structured and systematic approach to HSE investigations and workplace accident investigation.

Information gathering, which must:

- Be timely
- Be structured, setting out clearly what is known and unknown and recording the investigative process

Analysis from the accident investigation, which must:

- Be objective and unbiased
- Identify the sequence of events and conditions leading to the adverse event
- Identify the immediate causes
- Identify the underlying causes – in other words, past actions that have allowed or led unsafe conditions/practices to go undetected
- Identify the root causes – in other words, organisational and management HandS arrangements (supervision, monitoring, training, resources allocated to HandS, etc.)

Risk control analysis and measures:

- Identify the risk-control measures that were missing, inadequate or not applied.
- Compare conditions/practices as they were with those required by current legislation, codes of practice and guidelines
- Identify any additional measures needed to address the immediate, underlying and root causes of the incident/accident
- Provide meaningful recommendations that can be implemented.

Action plan and implementation:

- Develop an action plan with SMART objectives
- Ensure the action plan deals effectively not only with the immediate and underlying causes but also the root causes
- Include lessons that may be applied to prevent other adverse events
- Provide feedback to all parties involved to ensure the findings and recommendations are correct, address the issues and are realistic
- Communicate the results of the accident investigation and the action plan to everyone who needs to know
- Include arrangements to ensure the action plan is implemented and progress monitored

Target customers

Applus+ assists a wide range of clients and industry sectors in accident risk management. The urgency of an accident investigation will depend on the magnitude and immediacy of the risk involved, for example, a major accident involving an everyday job will need an incident investigation to take place quickly.

In general, adverse events (incidents and accidents) should be investigated and analysed as soon as possible. This is not simply good practice in accident risk management; it is common sense – memory is best and motivation greatest immediately after an adverse event.

Key customer benefits

Applus+ deploys highly experienced HSE accident investigation teams, which assist clients develop comprehensive plans in accident risk management:

- The prevention of further similar adverse events. If there is a serious accident, the regulatory authorities will take a firm line if an organisation has ignored previous warnings
- The prevention of business losses due to disruption, stoppage, lost orders and the costs of criminal and civil legal actions
- An improvement in employee morale and attitudes towards health and safety
- Greater employee cooperation in implementing new safety precautions if they were involved in the decision and they can see that problems are dealt with
- The development of managerial skills which can be readily applied to other areas of the organisation