

## Self Assessment Guide for Incident Reporting

### Overview:

An “incident” is an unplanned event or unsafe condition that could result in injury, illness, damage, or could increase the risk of such events occurring in the future. In some cases only a fortunate break prevented a serious injury or even a fatality from occurring.

The level of incident reporting in a co-op is a key indicator of employee buy-in and participation in its safety system and in many cases a sign of a healthy safety culture.

Having a well defined and clearly understood incident reporting process is fundamental to mitigating risk and exposures to future injuries. When employees fully participate and leaders ensure a structured process exists for follow-up, a key part of a continuous safety improvement process is established.

The incident reporting procedures should be specific and easy to understand, providing examples of the types of events and/or conditions that should be reported. In addition to communicating to all employees which events to report, the policy should also specify how to report an incident (i.e., severity of incidents, forms, checklists, etc.) and to whom the report should be submitted. Time frames should also be established, based on the level of seriousness, for investigations to be completed and recommendations made.

A main objective to any incident report is the “**lesson learned**”. Reports should describe what was observed and the factors that may have prevented the event from occurring. The incident is then subjected to root cause analysis in order to identify the root cause and the follow up actions needed to prevent reoccurrence. Co-ops should institute incident investigation training for the applicable personnel and make a commitment to continuous improvement through data collection and analysis. Top co-op leaders should review and approve the investigation findings to emphasize and promote the importance, and ensure the effectiveness of the process.

In order to maximize reporting co-op leaders must also set the expectation for a POSITIVE process, free of discipline. Employees must feel free and confident to report without fear of negative consequences or they simply will not participate and reporting will be driven underground. Many times leaders become tempted to administer discipline for obvious violations to basic rules or procedures when reports are **voluntarily** submitted by employees willing to actively participate in the process. Discipline must be completely separated from the incident reporting process and specifically addressed in the procedure.

Tracking the level of incident reporting can also provide a leading indicator of employee involvement and trust, and indicate the strength of a co-ops safety culture.

Active incident reporting and a strong follow up process can provide great opportunities for co-ops to reduce risk of future injuries.

<b>Evaluation Matrix – Effective Incident Reporting Process</b>		
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Attributes</b>
	1	Incident reports are handled anonymously if the employee so desires
	2	When employees voluntarily participate in the process disciplinary action is not taken
	3	Incident reporting is consistently encouraged and recognized at all levels of the co-op
	4	Employees actively participate in the process
	5	Employee believe and trust that disciplinary action will not occur when participating in the process
	6	Employees clearly understand how the process works
	8	Co-op leaders are evaluated and given feedback on the level of employee participation in their area of responsibility
	9	There is a specific defined procedure or process for reporting incidents
	10	The incident reporting procedure is fully communicated to all employees
	11	There are multiple ways to report incidents (hard copy / electronic / verbal)
	12	A clear predefined structure (i.e. Safety Committee, safety department, etc.) is in place to review and investigate reported incidents
	14	Time limits are established for the investigation of reported incidents based on level of severity (acting to establish a sense of urgency)
	15	Time limits are established and monitored for taking corrective follow up action based on incident investigation findings
	16	Incident communications are completed in a timely manner against pre-planned time limits
	17	Procedures establish predefined levels of incidents based on severity and the appropriate actions for handling and follow up for each level
	18	Incident reporting is tracked and monitored in the normal course of business

*5 - Exceeds, 4 - Satisfies All, 3 - Satisfies Most, 2 - Partially Satisfies, 1 - Fails to Satisfy Requirements*

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