

## INCIDENT REPORT

### What Does Incident Report Mean?

An incident report is a tool that documents any event that may or may not have caused injuries to a person or damage to a company asset. It is used to capture injuries and accidents, near misses, property and equipment damage, health and safety issues, security breaches and misconducts in the worksite.

- a formal document that details the facts related to an incident at the workplace. The report usually relates to an accident or injury that has occurred on the worksite, but it can also pertain to any unusual worksite occurrences such as near misses, security lapses, property and equipment damage, and health and safety issues.

Any incident that involves worker safety should be recorded, no matter how insignificant it may seem. An investigation of what happened should be undertaken as soon as possible after the incident occurs and after any injured persons have been taken care of. The report that is generated as a result should provide a full account of what took place.

### The Importance of an Incident Report

Incident reports indicate that there have been lapses in the workplace's safety protocols. Hence, reporting and documenting an incident is very important to identify the risks, failures and hazards that led to the incident.

Analyzing these reports can help organizations implement necessary changes, improvements, and corrective actions to prevent future incidents. An incident report will help:

- Prevent more serious accidents
- Improve existing health and safety practices
- Save time and resources
- Protect the company from financial losses and bad reputation
- Instill a sense of confidence in the employees

### Four main types of incidents should be reported in an organization:

**Unexpected Event:** These events include unexpected incidents or accidents that result in fatal, non-fatal physical injury or serious psychological injury to workers.

**Near Misses:** These events include incidents or accidents that had the potential to cause harm but did not do so.

**Adverse Events:** These events are related to adverse reactions to medicine, vaccines, or medical devices used for treating a medical condition or situation.

**Awareness Events:** This involves reporting any risks of potential incidents or accidents that can take place in the line of duty. The risks could be faulty or malfunctioning equipment, or the lack of safety equipment, training, and controls. The report must be communicated to all employees so that they can take the necessary steps to mitigate the risk.

### **Inside an Incident Report**

In addition to a description of the incident, the report should include:

- Type of incident
- The location of the incident including date and time
- Details of the injured person
- A list of witnesses to the incident or injury
- Detailed description and severity of the injury
- A description of the immediate measures taken in response to the incident
- Detailed description of the treatment after the incident
- Any anomalies that might have contributed to the incident
- Photo or video documentation of the event or its aftermath can also be included in an incident report
- Analysis of the incident

In the workplace, both executives and rank-and-file employees may be required to submit various kinds of reports like a progress report and accomplishment report. One kind of report that may be asked of you to submit is the incident report which Adler, et al. (2012) discussed as follows:

“An **incident report creates a written record of a troublesome occurrence**. The report is written either by the person involved in the incident or by the person in charge of the area where it took place. Such a report may be needed to satisfy government regulations, to guard against legal liability, or to draw attention to unsafe or otherwise unsatisfactory conditions in need of correction. Accordingly, an incident report must provide a thorough description of the occurrence and, if possible, an explanation of the cause. In addition, it often includes a section of recommendations for corrective measures.”

“When describing the incident, always provide complete details:

(1) Names and job titles of all persons involved, including onlookers; (2) Step-by-step narrative description of the incident; (3) Exact location of the incident; (4) Date and exact time of each major development; (5) Clear identification of any equipment or machinery involved; (6) Detailed description of any medical intervention required, including names of ambulance services and personnel, nurses, physicians, hospitals or clinics; (7) Reliable statements, quotations and paraphrases from persons involved; and (8) Outcome of the incident.”

Incident report works as the most important document to investigate the issues that arise at workplaces that value the health, well-being and safety of the employees.

**When discussing possible causes, “use qualifiers such as perhaps, maybe, possibly, and it appears that”.**

Do not report the comments of witnesses and those involved as if those observations were verified facts because, often, they are grossly inaccurate. Attribute all such comments to their sources, and identify them as speculations only.

Furthermore, exclude any comments unrelated to the immediate incident. Although you are ethically required to be as complete and accurate as possible, do not create an unnecessary suspicious climate by relying on second-hand accounts or reporting verbatim the remarks of persons who are obviously angry or distraught.

## **KEY BENEFITS OF REPORTING INCIDENTS**

### **1. Instant measures to the problem**

One of the biggest benefits of reporting incidents that happen at workplaces is getting immediate and necessary measures for the problem. It can prevent the problem and reoccurrence of it.

Not just that, by exhibiting an immediate reaction to the problem you showcase the employees that no matter what size the matter is, everything will be taken seriously. This way, as a safety manager, you magnify your responsibilities to ensure the staff is offered a safe place to work in peace.

### **2. Raise awareness against possible threats**

Threats made during the heated arguments can prove fatal or dangerous. By communicating the threats or risks, you will raise awareness among the affected employees.

For safety team, they will be able to take preventive measures before the things go out of hands.

When it comes to potential hazards in construction, manufacturing and mining industries, it is always better to let the employees know about the potential dangers. The more the employees will know, the more proactive they will stay.

### **3. Improve the process continuously**

With an incident report, the organization gets a clear picture of what it should focus on resolving first. The report can also aid in understanding potential changes, improvements or removal of process.

In fact, a **properly maintained incident report will help in implementing new regulations and policies to determine the effectiveness of new changes to quality and safety.**

- with an incident report, it can critically assess the employees to see if there are more skills training and equipment required or not.

Reporting incidents at the workplace will improve the organization's safety, thus, promoting sound and healthy work environment.

### **How to write an effective incident report?**

The incident report offers a structured way to investigate and record incidents. So, it is vital to create an effective incident report that contains the following details:

#### **1. Precise details**

Being precise with the details is the key to writing an effective incident report. Avoid being vague in the statements and make sure that every sentence is clear and refers to the incident. Once done with writing, see to it that you proofread the document to prevent any inaccuracies in the names of staff involved, dates and even time.

#### **2. Facts**

Incident reports do not have space for emotions or personal opinions, meaning you will require being objective and record only the facts. The report must contain both sides of the story without any favoritism. Also, while entering the witness statement, make sure that everything is clearly quoted.

#### **3. Complete picture of the incident**

Apart from being precise with details, you will need to be comprehensive too. See to it that the incident report covers everything from what, where, why to when and how. Also, all the details should be mentioned in the report by keeping the future investigation into concerns.

#### **4. Supporting Evidence**

You can leverage your facts by providing supportive evidence like CCTV footage, diagrams, photos or even phone calls. Clicking pictures of the damage can offer more transparency to the reader, ensuring everything is fully understood.

#### **5. Validation**

Confirm the authenticity of the incident report, you will require to take the signs of all the people included in the report.

### **HOW TO CLOSE AN INCIDENT REPORT?**

Once an incident is reported, the safety department or the personnel involved in safety activities takes over. Resolving and closing an incident is taken as a collective effort and involves multiple steps:

The first step involves setting a severity rating for the incident. This is a matrix based on the severity of the incident and the likelihood of it reoccurring.

The severity parameters include Very low, Minor, Serious, Fatal and Major hazard/calamity. The likelihood parameters include Almost certain/cyclic, Frequent/repetitive, Likely/intermittent, Unlikely/rare.

No matter how safe the work environment is, accidents or incidents are prone to happen and are often difficult to avoid. But, having the right preventive measures can become the cornerstone of preserving a healthy and happy working environment.

In fact, incident reports will not only help you to list comprehensive information about the issue but will also help in preventing the mishaps in future or even to inspire new changes.

## **WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A WORK INCIDENT REPORT**

It's important for work incident reports to include as much information as possible about an event. That way, if someone who wasn't there needs more information about the incident, they can easily access all the details.

Most reports include:

- The date and time of the incident
- The name of the witness or author of the report
- A detailed description of the events
- The names of the affected parties
- Other witness statements or important information
- The result of the incident

## **HOW TO CREATE AN INCIDENT REPORT**

There are many components to filling out an incident report. The following steps take you through each part of the incident report and explain how to respond to each section:

### **Have all basic facts prepared**

In order for an incident report to be useful, it is helpful for all facts listed in the report to be specific and accurate. Some of the first and most basic items on the incident report typically include:

- Your job title
- Supervisor's name
- Date
- Time

- Names of witnesses
- Location of the incident
- Your activities prior to the incident

When answering these questions, think about every component of the incident. For example, recall facts like the time of the incident, the activities employees performed during the incident and your location at the time of the event. Specific details like these can provide more insight for your supervisor who uses the incident report to plan for future safety precautions.

#### **EXAMPLE OF INCIDENT REPORT:**

John Aurora, an IT specialist, slipped and fell in the front lobby of the building, striking his head and momentarily losing consciousness.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

At approximately 2:55 pm on Friday, 16 October 2023, John Aurora was returning from his break when he slipped and fell in the front lobby, striking his head on the stone floor and momentarily losing consciousness. According to Ann Barrett, the receptionist, the floor had just been mopped and was still wet. She paged Mike Moore, the security officer, who in turn paged me. When I arrived at approximately 3:00 pm, John Aurora had revived. I immediately checked his vital signs, which were normal. He refused further medical attention and returned to work. I advised him to contact me if he experienced any subsequent discomfort, but to my knowledge there has been none.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Two ideas came to mind:

(1) Perhaps we should remind all employees to contact me first (rather than Security) in situations involving personal injury. The sooner I am contacted, the sooner I can respond. Obviously, time can be an important factor if the problem is serious.

(2) To prevent other occurrences of this nature, perhaps the maintenance staff should be provided with large, brightly colored warning signs alerting employees and the public alike to the presence of wet floors. I see these signs in use at the mall, the hospital, and elsewhere, and they don't appear expensive. I have also noted that many are bilingual, bearing both the English warning "Caution: Wet Floor" and the Tagalog warning "Babala: Basang Sahig." No doubt they can be ordered from any of the catalogs regularly received by your office.

#### **INCIDENT REPORT EXAMPLE 2**

Example of a completed incident report:

**Name:** Tamara O'Neil

**Department:** Shipping and receiving

**Phone Number:** 777-555-9291 Incident location: Loading dock #2

**Date:** 11/03/2024

Time: 11:45 a.m. Incident description: As Ray Fields was unloading pallets from the supply truck this morning, he tripped on the floor mat and fell off the loading dock. His foot fell between the truck and the dock edge, making it impossible for him to pull himself up and hurting his ankle. Ray shouted for help, and two other employees rushed over to assist him. They were able to pull him to safety. Ray had a scrape on his leg and a sore ankle. He rested in the break room for 20 minutes before returning to work.

**Incident causes:** The floor mat was a tripping hazard. Since it was an old mat, the corners curled up, making it easy for it to get caught under someone's foot. The space between the truck and the loading dock was also a hazard because it allowed Ray to fall through and become trapped.

**Follow-up recommendations:** Remove old floor mats if we notice signs of age or if they become hazardous. Park trucks close enough to the loading dock so that there isn't an entrapment risk.

**Employee signature:** Tamara O'Neil

**Additional witnesses signatures:** Ray Fields, Roy Ball, Mary Dyer