



What Happened?

When an accident of any type occurs on the jobsite, we need to ask ourselves who was hurt? What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? And finally, Why did it happen?

If you can answer all of these questions clearly and succinctly, you'll have all the facts you need to complete a thorough accident report file.

Does your company have an accident report form? An accident report procedure? A camera to take photographs of the accident site? Or do you wing it and hope someone will remember all of the important facts?

Not only does OSHA expect you to have the facts, your medical insurance company will require paper work. Your workers' compensation report form requires details. The hospital where you took the victim needs major details. So, the Who, What, When, Where and Why is your key to a "good" accident report program.

Here are some little bits and pieces of an accident report procedure that you need to process when an accident, injury or fatality occurs:

- **Prime Contractor**—Does the prime contractor on your jobsite require paper work? What kind? When?
- **Sub-Contractor**—Sub-contractors are under the same pressures as general contractors when it comes to accident report forms. Duplication? Sure, but duplication is good.
- **Near Misses**—The good thing about "near misses" is that no one was hurt. And another good thing is that often times we learn more from a "near miss" than we do from a "direct hit."
- **Interviews**—Be sure to interview at least one witness. Actually, you probably want to interview as many witnesses as you can find. Details are important. So is verification.
- **First Report of Accident**—State Workers' Compensation Bureaus require all employers to file a **First Report of Accident Form** with the State Agency in which the accident/injury occurred.
- **Photographs**—The more photographs you can get the better. Sometimes photographic evidence provides us with permanent recordation of the type of fall that occurred, damaged ladders, tripping hazards, etc.
- **9-1-1 Call**—The very first person you should call when an accident occurs is your 9-1-1 call to the local agency that dispatches ambulances, fire, police and other emergency facilities to the site where the accident/injury occurred and usually in less than ten minutes.

- **Rescue Squad**—The rescue squad that arrives on your construction site to aid a victim is composed of trained and skilled first-aid professionals with life-saving equipment.
- **Hospital**—With most accidents/injuries, it takes trained and properly equipped emergency medical technicians to properly move the injured victim to the ambulance, which will then safely transport the injured to a hospital where they can receive professional medical care.
- **First Aid**—Are you trained in first-aid treatment? Is anyone on your jobsite? Do you have a fully stocked first aid kit? The two go hand in hand.
- **Personal Protective Equipment**—Far too many accidents and injuries occur because the worker was not wearing and/or using adequate personal protective equipment (i.e., hard hats, wrap-around safety goggles, respirators, heavy-duty work gloves, heavy-duty work boots, etc.).
- **Loss-Time Injuries**—When you're injured, you sometimes lose blood, suffer pain, discomfort and things like eyesight, mobility, hearing, etc. are damaged. And what about your job? Your injury might disable you for weeks, months, years, or for life.
- **Work-Hardening Procedures**—Sometimes all is not lost just because you have an injury that puts you out of action for months and months. But "Work-Hardening Procedures" developed by leading hospitals and clinics often assist you in getting back to work within weeks rather than months (or years).
- **Police/Fire/Disaster Relief**—Depending on the type of injury or accident, you might need more than just a 9-1-1 call. You might also have to call the fire department if a major fire or explosion occurs. Or you might need police to render immediate flagging if vehicles, equipment, or people are hurt, damaged, or disabled.

Yes, the Who, What, When, Where, and Why are important to your accident investigation. You might not be able to memorize the fourteen key points outlined above, but surely you can remember these five key words: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

Broken necks, eyes, noses, teeth, shoulders, arms, ribs, legs, toes, all involve some degree of Hurt. If you have suffered any of these injuries, I bet you always remember that it was you that it happened to, What it was that hurt you, When it occurred, Where you were at the time of the accident, and Why you got hurt.