Stanford University
SU17 Incident Investigation – Tips for Supervisors

1. Purpose of an incident investigation

An incident investigation systematically identifies event details and causal factors to determine corrective actions that prevent incident recurrence. At Stanford University, an SU17 incident investigation must be completed for the following:

- Reported workplace injury/illness
- “Close call” safety-related incidents – events that could have resulted in an injury/illness (e.g. chemical spills, fires, equipment left running, water leaks around electrical equipment, slip/trip/fall hazards not marked).

2. Who investigates workplace incidents?

Supervisors must investigate any workplace incident involving their staff and follow-up with corrective measures. For additional assistance/consultation, supervisors can contact EH&S at 650-723-0448.

3. How are the incident investigation and follow-up corrective measures documented?

Incident investigations and follow-up efforts are to be documented using the SU17 Incident Investigation Report (http://su17.stanford.edu).

4. How soon must the SU17 incident investigation form be completed and submitted?

The SU17 form should be completed and submitted as soon as possible, at minimum within 24 hours of the incident. Email to incidentreport@stanford.edu with “SECURE:” in the subject line.

5. What are the key points to investigate and document?

A. What happened?

As you complete the SU17 form, it is important to gather as much relevant detail as possible about the incident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee describes in detail the events that led to the incident.</th>
<th>Description of injury/illness (type of injury/illness &amp; body part, e.g. sprained rt. ankle, severe cut on left thumb): Lower back pain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific task being performed at time of incident:</td>
<td>I was lifting and moving boxes of supplies from the delivery area to a department storeroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-by-step events leading up to the incident:</td>
<td>While lifting a box from the floor, I felt a sharp pain in my back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment/tools involved:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials being handled:</td>
<td>Box of office supplies (~40 lb.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusual condition(s):</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relevant details:</td>
<td>There was a large shipment of boxes today, so I was doing a lot of lifting. The hand truck has a broken wheel, so I didn’t use it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SU17 Part 3
Supervisor provides additional information that may help identify causal factors. Where additional detail is helpful, collect photos, sketches, and/or witness statements as soon as possible.

PART 3: ADDITIONAL INCIDENT INFORMATION

Supervisor: Comments (additional information on nature of incident details, etc.)
Employee routinely moves delivered items to the department storerooms/other employees. I was not aware that the hand truck was broken.

(Continued on next page)
B. What are the possible causal factors of the incident?
Part 4 of the SU17 report helps conduct a two-step root cause analysis, which uses incident facts to determine the underlying cause(s) of an incident. When completing Part 4, avoid vague statements like “employee carelessness.” The goal of this is to objectively identify systemic deficiencies that allowed the incident to occur, not to place individual blame.

SU17 Part 4
1) Use incident facts to identify process and personnel-related causes of the incident, AND
2) Determine how the above causes likely evolved (= root cause).

**PART 4: POSSIBLE CAUSAL FACTORS**

**Process/ environment-related:** (Check all that apply)
- Housekeeping
- Work procedure, or lack of
- Repetitive motion
- Tool/ equipment condition
- Tool/ equipment availability
- Personal protective equipment availability
- Workstation/ area setup
- Flooring/ ground
- Lighting
- Ventilation
- Other:

**Personnel-related:** (Check all that possibly apply)
- Tool/ equipment use or selection
- Work pacing
- Level of support/ assistance
- Awkward position(s)
- Personal protective equipment use
- Following of procedure/ instruction
- Level of attention to task
- Other:

**POSSIBLE ROOT CAUSE(S):** Factors contributing to the workplace condition(s) act(s) identified above
(please check all that apply)
- Awareness of job hazards
- Level of training
- Level of inspection/ maintenance
- Level of communication
- Level of resources available
- Other:

Training: Staff may not have adequate training on safe lift practices.
Inspection/ maintenance equipment is not periodically inspected
Communication: Staff may not have been informed of available hand truck. Also, need to ensure damaged equipment is reported to supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Cause</th>
<th>Root Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hand truck unavailable/broken</td>
<td>Broken equipment not promptly repaired or reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness level of safe lifting practices</td>
<td>Training not provided on safe lifting/handling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. What follow-up actions are planned/implemented?

SU17 Part 5
List all corrective actions that will help prevent recurrence of the causal factors identified in Part 4.

Supervisors must ensure follow-up actions are completed in a timely manner. These actions must be listed with their completion date(s) in Part 5 of the SU17 form. Note: completion dates can be recorded after the original form is submitted.

**PART 5: PLANNED FOLLOW-UP EFFORTS**

Check all that apply:
- Conduct ergonomic evaluation (01)
- Post safety signage in area (00)
- Review job performance (10)
- Review inspection and maintenance program (07)
- Review formal work procedure (08)
- Assess newly identified hazards (09)
- Other (11):

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION:**
For each follow-up effort checked above, indicate its action code (* in parentheses) and describe the planned action. As actions are completed, record completion date, and initial the original copy for local recordkeeping purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Code</th>
<th>Description of Planned Action</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Supervisor Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Replace damaged hand truck</td>
<td>Can submit form before completing</td>
<td>Can submit form before completing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Initial back safety training for employees who routinely handle boxes, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Clarify with employees the need to promptly report damaged equipment and determine if necessary to include hand trucks in periodic inspection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact EH&S at 723-0448 for additional assistance/consultation.

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1 Per Stanford University’s Injury and Illness Prevention Program (https://ehs.stanford.edu/topic/general-workplace-safety/injury-and-illness-prevention-program)