Emergency Services Accident Investigation

VFIS®
A Division of Glatfelter Insurance Group

A Guidebook for Fire and EMS Organizations

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VFIS Editor's Note

Good accident investigation is a very difficult task to accomplish. We hope this guidebook will help you conduct a good accident investigation and decrease accidents and losses within your organization.

Fatal accidents, serious injury accidents and significant property damage accidents are all examples of types of losses where important information as to causes can be learned. These types of losses are also very sensitive from an organizational liability standpoint. Before initiating your investigation into any of these types of accidents, communicate with your insurance agent or insurance company claims department to report the claim. The claims department will, from a liability standpoint, request your cooperation with their investigation. This is to protect your organization's time and resources.

The Author

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With more than 19 years of fire service experience, Mr. Williams has served as a volunteer fire fighter and chief officer, a military fire protection specialist, and as a career fire fighter and emergency medical technician. His fire service career started as a volunteer with the Hampden Township Volunteer Fire Company near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. From 1982 to 1985, Mr. Williams served with the United States Air Force as a fire protection specialist. In 1983, he was awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal for helping to establish the fire department at newly-built Comiso Air Station in Sicily. After his honorable discharge from the Air Force in 1985, Mr. Williams began working as an airport fire fighter / emergency medical technician at Harrisburg International Airport, where he is still employed today.

Mr. Williams has studied fire science and the fire service since the beginning of his career. He has earned an Associate in Applied Science degree in Fire Science Technology from Harrisburg Area Community College and a Bachelor of Science in Fire Science from the University of Maryland - University College. He is a certified fire service instructor for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, teaching primarily for the Public Safety Center at Harrisburg Area Community College. He has extensive training and experience in the field of fire fighter health and safety and has served on the Board of Directors of the Fire Department Safety Officers Association.

In 1994, Mr. Williams went to work for the Glatfelter Insurance Group (GIG) of York, Pennsylvania. He has worked with the Emergency Services Consulting Group, a subsidiary of GIG, as a consultant to fire departments since 1994. In that capacity he works primarily with fire fighter safety and health issues and has conducted health and safety evaluations for fire departments all over the United States. Since 1997, Mr. Williams has worked for VFIS, another subsidiary of Glatfelter Insurance Group, in its Client Education and Training Services division in the areas of program development and education delivery.

As a volunteer, Mr. Williams has served as a fire fighter, lieutenant, captain, training officer, safety officer, assistant fire chief, and as chief of the department. As a safety officer for more than eight years, Mr. Williams has had the opportunity to investigate numerous accidents and near misses.

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Overview

Each year, approximately 100 fire fighters lose their lives in service to their communities. An additional 100,000 fire fighters are injured on the job. On the EMS side, it is difficult to determine the exact number of injuries, although it is believed that there are approximately 100 EMS provider deaths annually. All of these figures include both volunteer and career personnel. VFIS, the leader in providing insurance to emergency services organizations, believes that most of these injuries and deaths are preventable. One of the best tools that we have to enable the prevention of injuries and deaths is the investigation of all accidents that occur, regardless of whether a death, injury or serious property damage was the result. It is in the investigation, and specifically in the information gathered during accident investigations, that we may find the solutions to many of the problems which create needless losses.

Every accident, including minor injury accidents and near miss accidents, offers a potential lesson to be learned. The unreported accident is automatically a lesson that has gone unlearned. When injury accidents are not reported, their causes usually go uncorrected. Thus the accident can recur, perhaps causing a serious injury or fatality. All accidents must be investigated to determine the cause of the accident and to ensure that actions to prevent recurrence are implemented.

This booklet has been developed by members of the emergency services to be used by emergency service organizations as a training aid and information source about the investigation of accidents. The booklet is not limited to the investigation of vehicular accidents, although they constitute a large portion of the accidents experienced by the emergency service community. In many instances, it is necessary and prudent to consult with your legal counsel and your insurance company claims department for advice on proper procedures to use during an accident investigation.

Purpose

When accidents occur it is natural for us to have sympathy for those affected. Our society is made up of organizations and individuals who spring into action whenever misfortune affects one of our own. The emergency services community is no different. Whenever we experience a loss, we band together and take care of the injured person or comfort the loved ones of a fallen comrade. We pick up the pieces of the damaged equipment, make the necessary repairs and go back in service. We've got a job to do and we must get on with it. Perhaps one of the reasons we continue to experience extremely high numbers of injuries and deaths is because we are so programmed to be sympathetic that we overlook the causes of the events that lead to injuries, deaths, and significant property damage. Another reason may be that for all our education and "street smarts," we still don't understand the need for and proper techniques of accident investigation.

One common perception is that investigation is the same as fault finding. In some ways, it may be. For instance, if the police are investigating a case of fraud, certainly the key reason for conducting the investigation is to place blame for the crime on a particular person or persons. But a secondary reason is that society demands answers for not only who committed the crime, but also how the crime was committed. This is done so that we may learn how to prevent future fraudulent acts. The emergency services must begin to separate these reasons for investigation as they apply to the investigation of accidents and near miss accidents.

The purpose of an accident investigation is to determine facts and prevent recurrence, not to find fault or assess blame. The investigator collects information on how and why the accident occurred, analyzes the information to determine the cause(s) of the accident, and helps to develop recommendations to prevent the event or condition from recurring. If the organization conducts an accident investigation for the sole purpose of assigning individual fault it may:

• cause employees to view your safety effort as a punitive program;

• cause the safety manager (or accident investigator) to be seen as someone who is sided with management against individual employees;

• create a climate of fear among employees;

• diminish the ability to prevent recurrence by reducing the quality of information and evidence collected following a mishap.

It is important to note that the accident investigation conducted by the emergency service organization should not be confused with an insurance claim investigation. The latter is done to evaluate your legal liability for damages and injuries and is conducted by the insurance company. Your insurer may guide your investigation and request information that was derived during your investigation. This is just one of the many reasons why any accident investigation must be done thoroughly.

A formal accident investigation is conducted for all fatalities, serious or potentially serious injuries and significant equipment damage accidents. The Serious Incident Investigation Review is conducted when an accident results in a fatality or potential fatality. The following guidelines describe the types of accidents that should be formally investigated.

• An accident / mishap resulting in personal injury or death to any party.

• Any accident / mishap which may involve violation of a department policy, procedure or regulation.

• Any accident or mishap involving the care or handling of a patient.

• Any accident or mishap which involves a vehicle not owned by the emergency services organization (or the municipality) and has the potential for

a serious claim. Serious claims can result from any injury.

• Any series of accidents involving the same person, especially where accidents occur over a relatively short period of time or involve similar circumstances.

• Any series of accidents that occur in a particular location.

• Near misses or "close calls," regardless of whether they resulted in actual injury or property damage.

This guidebook describes the accident investigation process and explains specific techniques an investigator should follow to ensure that all relevant information is collected, analyzed, and reported accurately and completely. Recommended practices for managing an Accident Investigation Program and associated record keeping requirements are also included.

Objectives

Accident investigations are designed to ensure that a safe workplace is maintained. The objectives of accident investigations are to:

• Provide a safe and healthful work environment for every employee.

• Identify and document all accident causes and develop corrective actions to eliminate those causes.

• Implement all recommendations in a timely manner to prevent accident recurrence.

• Develop safety awareness so that potential unsafe acts and conditions are identified and action is taken to prevent an accident.

• Aid in the ongoing development of methods for properly and promptly investigating all accidents, mishaps and near misses.

Preplanning

The objective of any accident prevention program is to reduce the likelihood and severity of accidents and to minimize the consequences of accidents that do occur. The preplanning phase of accident investigation is designed to assist you in preparing the employees of your organization for an accident.

Actions that you should take in the preplanning phase include:

• Ensure that employees know how to complete the accident report forms.

• Ensure that report forms and Accident Scene Instructions are readily available and placed in each vehicle.

• Develop a strategy for you and the employees to use to discuss any accident with an investigator. This includes preparing employees to use an accident scene checklist.

• Ensure that employees know what to do if they are involved in an accident. Written procedures should outline how accidents are reported to the dispatcher and to your insurance company. Prompt reporting of any accidents should be stressed.

• Establish procedures outlining who, from management, will be

required to respond to an accident. Different levels of management may be called upon to respond depending on the severity of the accident.

As a minimum, in volunteer departments, the fire chief or an assistant should respond to all accidents. In career departments, at least the shift supervisor and safety officer should respond to all accidents. For accidents with serious consequences (or potential for serious consequences) it is wise to include several layers of the management structure as well as your legal counsel in the investigation process. It is important to recognize these needs early and involve these other officials in the process.

While the immediate supervisor of the involved person may be assisting the department's safety officer with the actual, hands-on investigation procedures, a higher ranking officer may be involved to assist with coordinating investigation activities with other agencies such as police or insurance representatives. For example, at the scene of a structure fire, a fire fighter experiences a six-foot fall off of a ground ladder, but is not injured. His or her immediate supervisor and possibly the safety officer should look into and report on the incident. This level of investigation is adequate in this case. If the fire fighter would have sustained a broken back as a result of the fall, the level of activity naturally should be increased and elevated. In a critical example such as this, it may be necessary to bring in people from outside the organization. Loss control professionals from your insurance carrier, ergonomists or an attorney might be called upon. It is imperative that emergency service organizations train all supervisors to recognize which incidents should be investigated and who should conduct the investigation.

Accident Reporting Procedures

Each vehicle should be provided with an accident reporting packet. Drivers should immediately contact their dispatcher and communicate essential information contained in the accident report carried on each vehicle. VFIS is able to provide Driver's Accident Reporting Packets. (See Appendix 1) Each packet contains instructions for use, a pencil, Accident Report Form, and witness cards. Obtain a sufficient number of packets to equip each vehicle in your fleet.

VFIS Driver's Accident Reporting Packet.

Drivers should receive initial and annual training on accident reporting and demonstrate the ability to describe the procedures, actions, and information to be taken in the following circumstances:

• Collisions involving the organization's owned or leased vehicles.

• Collisions with any object or person by vehicles being used on the organization's business regardless of ownership.

• Any damage which occurs to any company vehicle, whether moving or parked, while operated by an employee.

• Involvement in any accident when damage claims might be made, despite the company vehicle not having made contact with other objects or vehicles. Minimum information that should be gathered at the scene by the driver includes names, addresses, driver's license numbers, car license numbers, and insurance information of all others involved, including witnesses.

• Mishaps involving patient drops, toppled stretcher, patient care procedural errors, etc.

Discoverability of Evidence

Evidence that is deemed discoverable refers to evidence which may be subpoenaed and admitted into a court of law during civil or criminal proceedings. Generally, any information or evidence that is developed during an accident investigation is discoverable, unless its development was directed by your attorney and is being maintained by him or her as "Attorney's Work Product." This should not deter you from conducting a thorough investigation unless your attorney or the insurance company claims department request you to do otherwise. A thorough investigation is imperative to determine the facts of the accident and prevent recurrence. As part of the preplanning process, consult with your attorney about methods you might be able to employ to protect against the admissibility of information and evidence that is developed during an accident investigation.

Another part of the preplanning process calls for the establishment of procedures and regulations pertaining to the dissemination of accident report findings. Any dissemination of accident report findings should be done judiciously and with an eye toward protecting against the admissibility of that information during legal proceedings. This should not deter the safety officer from reporting facts about the accident to members of the organization in a timely manner in order to prevent a recurrence of the incident.

All serious accidents and any accident that results in serious personal injury, death or involves a third party should be promptly reported to your legal counsel and your insurance agent or insurance company. The accidents listed above can be summarized as "serious accidents." All serious accidents should be thoroughly investigated by trained personnel. Results of serious accident investigations and any formal reports generated should be shared with legal counsel and your insurance company claims department. It is important that organizations differentiate between serious accidents and

non-serious accidents, and that only serious accidents need be reported to legal counsel.

In the course of the accident investigation, all files, documents, and papers prepared in connection with the accident investigation of serious accidents should be stamped or clearly labeled with the statement, "Prepared in anticipation of litigation." Labeling documents in this manner generally protects their use as "Attorney's Work Product." This practice should not be utilized for all organizational files, documents, or papers, but should be reserved for use only with papers associated with serious accidents which carry with them the substantial threat of litigation. In other words, the practice should not be done routinely to all organizational papers.

The organization's legal counsel should be sought to help prepare a written policy on the subject of discoverability of evidence. All personnel should be thoroughly trained on the implementation of this policy. Prior to interviewing accident participants or witnesses, the investigator should include a briefing on discoverability of evidence and the protection granted by proper use of the preparation for discoverability policy.

The Investigation Process

This section describes a series of steps that investigators should take to ensure the needed information is collected and analyzed to develop recommended corrective actions to prevent recurrence of the accident. Although the sequence of events may vary depending on the severity of the accident and the conditions at the accident scene, an investigator should know and follow the entire investigative process.

An accident investigation is conducted in five or six phases depending on the nature of the accident and the severity or potential severity of the injury or equipment damage. This section describes the steps an investigator follows to collect the appropriate data to analyze the cause of the accident, both unsafe conditions and human factors, and develop recommendations to prevent recurrence. The investigator needs to ensure that all phases of the investigation are completed to achieve the primary purpose of a loss control investigation, that is, to prevent recurrence.

Investigation Phase Objectives

Phase I: Control the Scene of the Accident. The investigator's initial concern is to ensure that injured people are cared for and the scene of the accident is secured to prevent further accidents and to preserve evidence.

Phase II: Collect Information. During this stage, the investigator collects information through observations and interviews. The investigator collects all the information needed to analyze and determine the cause of the accident. Only when the appropriate types of information are collected can the investigator logically determine the cause of the accident.

Phase III: Analyze the Information (Accident Analysis). After information about the accident has been collected, the investigator needs to begin to make some preliminary determinations as to what is the immediate cause of the accident and what may be the root cause of the accident. Thorough and accurate analysis of information is crucial to the task of preventing the accident from occurring again in the future. The objective of this phase is preliminary identification of the causes. Information gained later may change the cause determination.

Phase IV: Complete the Accident Report. A complete and accurate Accident Report is crucial to the investigation process. The report is used to document the conditions and events related to the accident. The report must accurately and clearly describe the events related to the accident, the causes of the accident, and recommended corrective actions to prevent recurrence. The Accident Report is used to inform all appropriate employees through orientations and contacts of lessons learned and to serve as a record to help analyze the long-term trends in accidents.

Phase V: Conduct a Formal Investigation, If Needed. A formal accident investigation is conducted for all fatalities, serious or potentially serious injuries, and significant equipment damage accidents. The formal investigation is conducted as a meeting with the investigator, high level management representatives, attorneys, insurance claims representatives, union representation (if applicable), and the employee(s) involved to ensure that the investigation was conducted completely and that the recommended corrective actions will prevent recurrence.

Phase VI: Follow Up on Corrective Actions. The investigation process can not be completed until the corrective actions have been implemented to correct the conditions or human factors that contributed to the accident. A system for monitoring implementation of the corrective actions is necessary to ensure that the accident conditions can be prevented in the future.

Investigation Phases

Phase I - Control the Scene of the Accident. This phase of the investigation includes ensuring that the injured person(s) receive prompt and appropriate medical attention and controlling the hazardous conditions associated with the accident to prevent further accidents and preserve evidence. If interviews are not possible at this time, the investigator should obtain the names of the injured and the name and telephone number of all witnesses. Witness cards are included in the VFIS Driver's Accident Reporting Packet (See Appendix 1) and should be completed for each witness.

Accidents should be investigated as soon as practical after they occur. The sooner the investigation begins, the more likely the investigator will be able to collect the necessary information. Common sense tells us that when there

is a time lapse between the accident and the investigation, memory of the events becomes diluted and witnesses and victims simply will not be able to provide a clear description of the incident. Depending on the nature of the accident and the conditions of the scene, an investigator should ensure the following steps are taken at the accident scene:

• Take control at the scene and control access to the site.

• Ensure that victims are provided with first aid, notify dispatch, and call for appropriate emergency services.

• Control potential secondary accidents.

• Preserve evidence from alteration or removal.

• Investigate to determine loss potential.

• If the accident involves motor vehicles and / or occurred on a public street, inform the investigating police officer(s) of your presence and explain that you are charged with performing the accident investigation for the emergency services organization. Offer any assistance with their investigation.

• Contact your insurance company representative.

Phase II - Collect Information. During this phase, the investigator collects information through observations, photographs, and interviews. This phase is conducted at the scene of the accident as well as at other times and places. The investigator collects information needed to analyze and determine the cause of the accident. Only when the appropriate types of information are collected can the investigator logically determine the cause of the accident.

When an accident has occurred, the Safety Officer should attempt to interview crew members and witnesses at the scene.

Observation. Observation is a key tool an investigator uses to collect information and evidence. The main purposes are to ensure that the conditions at the accident scene are observed and documented and to collect evidence related to the condition for analysis to determine the cause of the accident. To accomplish these purposes the investigator needs to:

• Identify evidence to collect, note weather and road conditions, take photographs, and draw a diagram of the position of the vehicles and any objects that may have been involved.

• Collect operating logs, charts, or records.

• Note identification numbers on

equipment.

• Sign and date photos and include dimensions on diagrams.

Photography. A picture is worth a thousand words. Photographing the accident scene assists the investigator in preserving evidence that would otherwise be lost. In order to accomplish this it is essential that certain equipment be available to the investigator. The following recommended minimum equipment is needed to begin the investigation at the scene:

Accident investigation "kit."

• Camera: 35 mm with capability of placing the date on each exposure. Also, consider equipping each vehicle with a disposable model that can be used until an investigator arrives on the scene.

• VFIS Emergency Vehicle Accident/Loss Investigation Report Forms (See Appendix 2)

• Pen and paper

• 50-foot tape measure (minimum)

• Hand-held tape recorder

• Construction grade chalk

• Optional: Video taping equipment; Polaroid™ camera

In photographing the accident scene you should follow this sequence:

1. Start by constructing a diagram of the scene. This is a working tool for you to use at a later date. It will assist you in reconstructing the accident scene using witness statements and photographs. As a minimum, the accident diagram should include:

• Magnetic north orientation.

• Position of each vehicle prior to and after impact. For non-vehicular accidents, note the position of involved equipment such as ladders or power equipment.

• Intersections, signs, lights, traffic signals, etc.

• Witness locations and activity at the time of the accident.

• Sun location.

• Environmental factors: Water, ice, fog, etc.

• Location of personnel in emergency vehicle and other affected vehicles.

• Include dimensions of distances between objects, size of the objects on the diagram, etc.

2. Begin taking photographs. Photography of the accident scene should follow these guidelines:

• Overshoot and under print - Take as many photos as possible because once the accident scene has been cleared, you will lose the ability to col-

lect vital information. You can decide later what to print.

• Record the content (write it down) of each photo as the exposure is taken. A brief description of what you are shooting will be important later.

• Be systematic about the sequence of your photography. Take your photos in the following steps:

Overall view of accident scene.

Close circle view #1.

Close circle view #2.

Detailed view.

• Overall view. Photograph the entire accident scene from a distance.

• Key reference points. Photograph permanent markers (street signs, buildings, land features, etc.) so they show the relationship to the accident.

• Close circle view. Photograph 50 feet from the scene and focus on position of vehicles, skid marks, debris, etc.

• Detailed view. Close-up photographs of personnel, vehicles, etc. Pay particular attention to damaged areas and items that may have failed prior to the accident.

• Photograph direction of travel for all vehicles involved at the time of the accident.

Interviews

In investigating an accident, witness reports are often the most important tool an investigator possesses. This section addresses witness categories and interview techniques.

Witness Categories

• Eye Witnesses: Persons who actually saw the accident / mishap or saw anything relevant to the subject matter of the investigation.

• Expert Witnesses: Technically qualified persons who may be called upon to give their opinions upon any technical question arising out of the accident / mishap.

• Other Witnesses: Persons who have knowledge of facts that are relevant to the accident or the investigation.

Interview Steps

An investigator's primary tool for collecting information is the interview. The investigator needs to use effective interviewing skills to ensure that complete and accurate information is collected. An investigator should be aware that a person involved in an accident or near miss may be emotionally distressed and might view the accident investigator as someone seeking to place blame for the accident. The effective use of interviewing skills can help establish the cooperative attitude needed to ensure that the information collected is complete and accurate.

Crew members who were involved in the accident should be interviewed in a quiet, one-on-one setting.

The quantity and quality of information collected during the interview are often directly related to the investigator's ability to conduct an effective interview. The purpose of the interview is to identify the events surrounding the accident and try to determine exactly what happened.

Interviews should be conducted as soon as possible after the accident and, initially, at the scene of the accident. Delays in conducting the interview can affect the quality and quantity of information collected. However, an injured person should never be interviewed if the interview will delay medical treatment or if the injured person is too distressed to provide accurate information.

Following is a model for the steps that should be taken to conduct a thorough interview.

1. State the Purpose of the Investigation. The investigator establishes cooperation by stating that the purpose of the investigation is to determine how the accident occurred and how to prevent recurrence, but not to place blame. The objective is to place the interviewee at ease in order to gather the information needed to complete the investigation. Make it clear to the person being interviewed that your goal is to prevent this accident from occurring again in the future. Assure them that you are not attempting to place blame on anyone for causing the accident. Prior to interviewing accident participants or witnesses, the investigator should include a briefing on discoverability of evidence and the

protection granted by proper use of the organization's policy on preparation for discoverability of evidence.

2. Ask for a Description of Events and Ask Follow-Up Questions. This phase of the interview should focus on the questioning and listening skills of the investigator. Allow the person being interviewed to tell you how they saw the event. Try not to interrupt.

The types of questions asked during an interview influence the environment of the interview and the amount and type of information received. The four basic types of questions are open, closed, probing and leading or loaded.

Open-Ended Questions. These questions ask for general information and allow the interviewee to structure the response. Open questions provide information that the investigator uses to ask other types of questions. This type of question should not create a defensive attitude because the interviewee controls the response. An example is, *"Would you tell me how the accident happened?"*

Closed-Ended Questions. Closed-ended questions are designed to limit the responses available to the interviewee. Closed questions allow the investigator to ask many questions in a short time and are best for following up on a response to an open question. This type of question is appropriate when limited or specific information is required. An example is, *"Do you believe you were speeding?"* Closed-ended questions allow the interviewer to hone in on specifics. If not used properly, however, the rapid fire questioning sequence can make the interviewee feel like he or she is on a witness stand. If the investigator uses closed questions inappropriately, the interviewee will have a tendency to become defensive and resentful.

Probing Questions. These questions are used to clarify information or gain additional information. Probing questions are always based on the information given by the interviewee, usually in response to an open question. Probing questions are useful because they focus the interviewee's response to specific information. They can be used to clarify a response or an inconsistency. An example is, *"What method did you use to check for clearance behind your vehicle before backing up?"*

Leading/Loaded Questions. Leading and loaded questions have a hidden agenda and usually ask the interviewee to agree with a position already held by the investigator. An example is, *"Don't you agree that the driving training you received was adequate?"*

The investigator, with the permission of the interviewee, should tape the interview. When the tape recorder is started, the interviewer should state the date and time, the names of the persons in the room, the reason for the interview and the fact that the interviewee and all other parties in the room have agreed to taping the interview.

The investigator should start with an open-ended question such as, "Can you tell me what happened?" to get the interviewee to respond. The interviewee should not be interrupted until the answer to an open-ended question is completed. Then the investigator can use closed-ended questions that require a short answer to gain additional information. For example, "Was there ice on the highway?" could be asked to clarify a point made during the answer to the open-ended question. Closed and probing questions are appropriate for asking follow up questions to gain needed information. The series of open or closed-ended questions is determined by the flow of information during the interview.

When conducting an accident investigation interview, the interviewer should look for body language that indicates a defensive or uncooperative attitude.

During the interview the investigator should be aware of nonverbal clues given by the interviewee. For example, if the interviewee displays facial expressions that indicate a lack of cooperation, the investigator can state the purpose of the investigation again. The investigator should never have to defend the purpose of the investigation. The investigator needs to maintain an objective, professional manner to ensure that the interview achieves the intended results.

The following questions should be answered as part of all accident investigations.

1. What was / were the person / persons involved doing at the time of the accident?

2. What apparatus, tools or equipment were involved, if any?

3. Where did the accident occur? (Be specific including location, area, or job site).

4. What was happening around the work area? (External influences.)

5. Did the person / persons involved know what the hazards were?

6. Was the person / persons involved trained to do the task safely?

7. What contributed to this accident? (Another work group; defective tool; faulty equipment, etc.)

8. Was more than one person involved? If so, who and how?

9. Were there any witnesses? If so, who are they and what did they see?

10. Was the accident preventable? (In the opinion of the persons involved.)

3. Verify Comprehension. The investigator should ensure that the information being provided by the interviewee is understood. Active listening techniques include paraphrasing and summarizing. After asking a question,

the investigator evaluates the information and attitude of the interviewee. An investigator's verbal and nonverbal reactions indicate active listening. When interviewees feel the investigator is not listening, they reduce the amount of information given and can become less cooperative.

• **Paraphrasing.** Paraphrasing is used when the investigator states his or her comprehension of the interviewee's response. Paraphrasing should be used when the investigator feels the interviewee has made a statement that clearly needs to be understood by both parties. An example is, "If I understand you correctly, you were wearing your safety belt?"

Take note that paraphrasing can also lead to another line of questioning. If the interviewee answers "right" or "that is correct", the paraphrase serves as a closed question. If the investigator's understanding was not correct, the paraphrase serves as an open or probing question; thus, the interviewee needs to provide additional information.

• **Summarizing.** This technique is used at the end of each topic and at the end of the interview. The difference between summarizing and paraphrasing is that summarizing covers all the key points related to a specific topic or the entire interview. An example is, "let's go over the events that led to the accident." This technique is especially useful when a great deal of information is covered during an interview because it serves as a comprehension check for both parties.

When you feel you have asked all the questions that are necessary, take a few moments to verify comprehension. Tell the person being interviewed what you have written down about their description. Clarify any points that are in question and correct those points that have not been accurately recorded. A few minutes spent reviewing the content of the interview may save countless hours trying to piece together sketchy information at a later date. Inform the interviewee that you may call on them later to clarify information.

4. Discuss Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence. Often the person involved in the accident will have an immediate recommendation as to how it could be prevented. Prior to ending the interview, spend a little time discussing recommendations to prevent recurrence of the accident. This will go a long way toward assuring the person being interviewed that your primary purpose is to do just that - prevent recurrence. In discussing options for prevention with the people involved in the incident, you will be empowering them to help establish policies and procedures to prevent such accidents from occurring in the future.

5. End the Interview on a Positive Note. Always try to end the interview on a positive note. Thank the interviewee for their time and cooperation. Remind them that they have helped greatly with the investigation process and that because of their help, other members may not have to suffer

through the consequences of such accidents in the future.

Phase III - Accident Analysis. Upon completion of the interview process, the investigator should have enough information to begin to make some preliminary conclusions about the immediate cause of the accident and the basic or root cause of the accident. This is perhaps the most important part of the investigation process because all remaining components of the process, and certainly the implementation of corrective actions, is based upon a correct identification of the immediate and basic causes of the accident.

The immediate cause of an accident is the unsafe act and/or condition that occurred. Unsafe acts are those acts which were committed by the injured individual or another individual that directly led to the accident. Unsafe conditions involve machinery, tools, materials, or building components that cause an accident.

Almost any task that we undertake in emergency service work can be accomplished in a safe manner. Conversely, there is also an unsafe manner by which to complete most tasks. Following is a list of categories of unsafe acts and some common links to accidents in the emergency services.

- Making safety devices inoperable.

  Aerial devices

  Seat belts

  Dead-man switches

Unsafe acts and unsafe conditions are the two categories of immediate causes of accidents.

- Failure to use guards provided.

  Bench grinders

  Power saws

  Sharps

- Using defective equipment.

  Power saw blades, chains

  Hydraulic equipment

  Fire hose (burst)

- Servicing equipment in motion.

  Automotive

  Power saws

  Hydraulic equipment

- Failure to use proper tools/equipment.

  Using sledge hammer to break tempered glass

  Using chain saw without guard for venting truss roof

- Operating machinery or equipment at unsafe speed.

  Apparatus incidents

Hydraulic equipment

- Failure to use personal protective equipment.

  PASS devices

  SCBA

  Helmets, gloves

- Operating without authority.

  Freelancing

  No partner

- Unsafe loading or placing.

  Air shores

  Cribbing

  Rescue air bags

- Improper lifting, lowering, or carrying.

  Patients

  Ladders

  Sharp objects (hand tools)

- Taking unsafe position.

  Above the fire

  Below unstable object

  In hazardous atmosphere

- Unnecessary haste.

  Apparatus accidents

  Trips and falls

  Station incidents

- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

  Apparatus accidents

  Trips and falls

  Unexplainable events

  Fights

- Physical limitation or mental attitude.

  Stress related injuries (heart attacks, stroke, heat injury)

  Taking unnecessary risks

- Unsafe act of another.

  Apparatus accidents

- Unaware of hazards.

  Contact with power sources

  Struck by falling objects

  Exposed to hazardous substance or infectious material

As mentioned previously, in addition to unsafe acts, unsafe conditions may also be attributed as the immediate cause of an accident. Following is a list of unsafe conditions and how they may manifest themselves in emergency services work.

- Inadequate guards or protection.

  Bench grinders

  Seat belts

  Open cabs on apparatus

- Defective tools or equipment.

  Power saw blades or chains

  Hydraulic equipment

  Fire hose (burst)

- Congested work area.

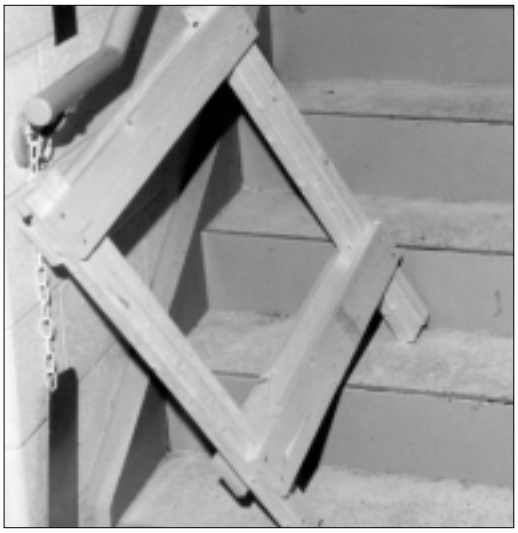
Too many personnel in an area

Cramped station quarters

- Poor housekeeping.

Trip hazards in station

Fire hazards in station



Poor housekeeping practices lead to many accidents.

- Unsafe floors / stairways / etc.

Wet floors

Items on stairways

Narrow stairways

- Improper material storage.

Heavy items stored high

Hazardous materials

- Inadequate ventilation.

Carbon monoxide

Diesel exhaust

Take note that "carelessness" does not appear on either list. Carelessness can be attributed to many other items, especially those found in the list of "Unsafe Acts." Quite often "carelessness" may be a result of lack of attention to detail, which may indicate either an attitude problem or the fact that the person was using unnecessary haste.

When the immediate cause of the accident has been discovered, the investigator then begins the important work of determining the basic or root cause of the accident. Determining why the unsafe acts and unsafe conditions were present is probably the most difficult part of the accident investigation. Investigators must be prepared to face some critical decisions with regard to reasons why the unsafe acts and unsafe conditions were allowed to exist.

Basic or root causes of accidents tend to be programmatic in nature. For example, let's say that the investigation reveals that the immediate cause of the accident is that the driver of a fire apparatus did not stop for a red traffic signal during an emergency response. With some further investigation we determine that the driver training program does not specifically require that driver trainees be taught to stop for red lights. The basic cause of the accident may be an inadequate and incomplete driver training program.

It is extremely important that the investigator keep in mind that the reason for the accident investigation in the first place is to determine the cause of the accident so that improvements can be made and future accidents can be avoided. In the previous example involving the driver training program, how do you think the training officer is

going to feel when the accident report is published and the root cause of the accident is found to be an inadequate training program? The investigator must take care in determining root causes so that positive results may be achieved. This is not to say that investigators should shy away from assigning basic causes if they are going to "ruffle someone's feathers." To the contrary, investigators must report what they feel to be the truth. The trick is to report the findings in a positive manner.

Following is a list of categories of basic causes and some examples of those basic causes as they apply to emergency service accidents.

- Inadequate hiring practices
  - Physically unfit
  - Mentally unstable
  - Multiple driving violations
- Inadequate job placement.
  - Physically unfit
  - Mentally unstable
  - Multiple driving violations
  - Lack of education
- Lack of proper job procedures.
  - Inadequate SOPs, SOGs
- Inadequate job instruction.
  - Inadequate training lesson planning
  - Poor instruction
  - Lack of training resources
  - Poor skills evaluation
- Inadequate enforcement of work standards.
  - Poor officership skills
  - Lack of officership training
  - Lack of upper management support of officers
- Inadequate preventive maintenance program.
  - No written maintenance program
  - Lack of enforcement of existing program
  - Lack of resources (personnel, facilities, training, etc.)
  - Poor record keeping
- Improper layout or design.
  - Apparatus (ladders, hoseloads, storage)
  - Stations (stairs, exit ways, disinfection facilities)
  - Training facilities

Phase IV - Complete the Accident Report

After gathering all the information from the various investigative sources, the investigator completes the Accident Report. An Accident Report should be completed for:

- All accidents involving personal injury.
- All near miss accidents.
- Property or equipment damage accidents.

- Mishaps involving patients.

Accident Reports should follow the format developed and provided by your insurance carrier or one approved by the company. Organizations insured by VFIS should use the Emergency Vehicle Accident / Loss Investigation Report (See Appendix 2) for all vehicle accidents. All employees who operate company vehicles should receive initial and refresher training on the proper completion of an accident report.

For other types of incidents and accidents, VFIS has a variety of forms available. They are included in the Appendix to this guide.

It is extremely important that the investigator take great care in completing the accident investigation form. Keep in mind that the document may become discoverable as part of a legal action in the future. (See the section on "Discoverability of Evidence".) The investigator should be as thorough as possible in describing what steps were taken in the investigation process, what statements were taken from individuals involved in the accident or those who witnessed it, descriptions of the physical evidence found, and how conclusions were drawn.

As mentioned in the previous section, the investigator should write the accident report with an eye toward prevention of future accidents, and should avoid placing blame for the accident. It is inevitable and natural that some persons involved with the incident, especially those responsible for root causes, will react defensively to the accident report. For this reason, it is important that upper management be given an opportunity to view the report before its findings and recommendations are summarized and disseminated to personnel. Investigators must be prepared to steadfastly stand by their conclusions when faced with criticism from those deemed responsible for the accident. Again, upper management must support the idea of accident investigation for the purpose of accident prevention versus placement of blame. If that policy is supported from above, those persons found responsible for accidents will be less likely to be defensive when faced with constructive criticism of their area of responsibility.

Phase V - Convene Accident Review Committee (If needed)

A formal investigation is conducted for all serious injury accidents and near miss accidents with high potential for injury or significant equipment damage. The formal investigation is a group effort to identify causes and develop recommendations to prevent recurrence. The Accident Review Committee should consist of a supervisor, a representative of management, the safety officer, legal counsel, the injured, witnesses, and union representation (if applicable.)

The group reviews the accident event as reported by the investigator and seeks to establish the specific causes of the accident. This process may take the form of reviewing the Accident Report developed by the investigator as well

as reviewing applicable documents such as company rules and regulations, Standard Operating Procedures, etc.

The Accident Review Committee need not meet to review all accidents. The organization should stipulate in writing which accidents need to be formally reviewed by the committee.

Obviously, in cases of serious injury and death, there is a much greater chance of litigation. It is prudent in these cases to seek outside help in the form of legal counsel, and / or consultation with experts in the field of accident investigation.

Phase VI - Follow Up on Corrective Actions

For those conditions that could not be corrected on the spot by the investigator, a system for follow up on the implementation of the corrective actions is needed to ensure the accident does not recur. Depending on the nature of the recommended corrective action, different levels of employees and management are involved in ensuring that the actions are implemented.

Generally, the safety officer, supervisors, or designated representatives of management are responsible for ensuring that the actions are implemented. For example, management would be responsible for ensuring that the recommended change in process or equipment is implemented, while a supervisor may be responsible for ensuring that employees know and understand the correct procedures, and are, in fact, following those procedures.

Serious Incident Investigation Review

The Serious Incident Investigation Review is conducted after the investigation of an accident that resulted in a fatality, serious or potential of serious injury, significant damage to equipment, patient handling accident, or any mishap that could result in legal action or major insurance claims. This review is conducted to ensure that:

- A thorough investigation has been conducted.
- Any violations of policy have been identified and recorded.
- Appropriate action to prevent recurrence has been developed and recorded.

The review is conducted by a team consisting of:

- Management personnel, as directed by the chief.
- Supervisor of the area where the mishap occurred.
- Safety officer.
- Union representative, if applicable.
- Attorney.

The department should seek advice from counsel with regard to requesting third-party review of the Serious Incident Investigation Review team's findings. In most cases, this is not only prudent, but may also produce additional findings missed by the review team.

The chief is responsible for the Serious Incident Investigation Review. The safety officer or the supervisor of the area in which the accident occurred chairs the review process. Each member of the review team critiques the Accident Report and the investigation process. A typical process is as follows:

1. Prior to the review meeting, the safety officer or supervisor provides attendees with a copy of the Accident Report. The Accident Report must contain all the details relating to the events of the accident, including testimony of witnesses.

2. During the meeting, the safety officer:

• Explains the accident in detail, covering all items in the same sequence as recorded on the Accident Report. Photographs, sketches, models, or other visual aids should be available.

• Defines the rationale for identifying direct or indirect human factor (unsafe act) causes.

• Defines the rationale for identifying direct and indirect unsafe conditions.

• Defines the rationale for identifying basic or root causes of the accident.

• Explains in detail the recommended actions to prevent recurrence.

• Identifies those responsible for initiating actions to prevent recurrence.

• Reviews the date for completion of actions to prevent recurrence.

• During the review, the team members question and comment on any part of the report or the investigation. If appropriate, the Accident Report is revised to reflect changes resulting from the review. Final copies are submitted to the chief within a reasonable period of time after the review.

Managing the Accident Investigation Program

Management is responsible for ensuring that accident investigations are conducted completely and documented correctly. Recommended practices to include as part of the system are:

• Provide overall direction and guidance to the program.

• Ensure that Accident Reports are completed correctly and in a timely manner.

• Ensure that record-keeping functions are performed correctly.

• Participate in accident investigations and Serious Incident Investigation Reviews.

• Seek legal counsel when necessary.

• Keep legal counsel informed of the status of ongoing accident investigations.

• Periodically audit the status of the Accident Investigation Program.

Accident Report Process Flow

The steps of the accident report process should flow as follows:

• Under the direction of a supervisor, parties involved in the accident should complete a preliminary Accident

Report before the end of their work shift or otherwise as soon as possible.

• The Supervisor forwards the preliminary Accident Report to the safety officer or designee of management by the end of the shift or otherwise as soon as possible.

• The safety officer or designee of management delivers the preliminary accident report to the Chief.

• The safety officer and supervisor review the preliminary Accident Report for completeness and revise where necessary. If needed, the supervisor and safety officer will discuss the accident with the injured or witnesses. If a serious injury accident or an accident with high potential for serious injury occurred, a formal investigation is conducted at this point.

• The supervisor and safety officer prepare the final preliminary Accident Report.

• The supervisor and safety officer, and the individual involved in the mishap review the document and either approve it or recommend that amendments be made.

• The Final Accident Report is completed and is distributed.

Record Keeping

Keep in mind that any report made of an accident investigation may be required to support future legal or insurance claims. Personnel should be thoroughly trained on how to properly and thoroughly complete all forms and reports regarding accident investigations. The following records should be used to document the accident and maintained on file indefinitely.

• Accident Report Status Log.

• Accident Report.

• Accident forms used to collect information.

• All statements, recordings, and transcripts of witness accounts of the accident.

• All photographs and diagrams of the accident scene and personnel and equipment involved.

• Medical reports of those injured and autopsy reports (or instruction on how to obtain autopsy reports) for the deceased.

VFIS has included in the Appendices to this booklet examples of a variety of forms which may be used to record information pertaining to accidents and exposures. These include a Driver's Accident Reporting Packet (Appendix 1), an Emergency Vehicle Accident / Loss Investigation Report Form (Appendix 2), an Infectious Exposure Form (Appendix 3), an Incident Exposure Record (Appendix 4), and a Personal Injury / Illness Investigation Report (Appendix 5.) Users may feel free to make copies of these forms or contact VFIS for copies.

Accident Report Status Log

To ensure that Accident Reports are completed as required, the department should maintain an Accident Report

Status Log to monitor the timely completion of Accident Reports and follow up on corrective actions. The status log should include:

- Date of accident.
- Description of accident.
- Date accident report was received.
- Date accident investigation was completed.
- Recommended measures to prevent recurrence.
- Date measures implemented and name of responsible individual(s).
- Date accident file was closed.

Personnel Training on Reaction to Accidents

It is important that line personnel know what to do in the event of an accident. The initial actions taken by personnel involved in the accident can make or break the investigation efforts that will follow. Part of managing an accident investigation program is ensuring that personnel are trained and know what to do in the moments after an accident has occurred.

Emergency service personnel must be trained on post-accident procedures.

The following points should be included as part of the training program for all personnel.

For Vehicle Accidents

- When conditions and/or regulations permit, move to the shoulder or side of roadway to prevent further damage or hazards. Place warning signs promptly.
- Ask someone to summon police (or, if possible, request police assistance through the emergency dispatcher), and medical assistance if anyone is injured.
- Give aid if needed.
- Keep calm, be courteous. Be helpful. Be cooperative. Don't argue. Make no statements concerning the accident to anyone except a police officer. Get the officer's name and badge number. Do not admit fault and make no promises of settlement!
- Notify a chief officer or the safety officer as soon as possible and inform them of the situation.
- Report as soon as possible to your supervisor. If the safety officer or other trained investigator will not visit the scene shortly, you must begin the accident investigation.
- Observe and identify the surroundings. The time to gather information is at the scene.

1. Begin completing your VFIS Emergency Vehicle Accident/Loss Investigation Report form (Appendix 2) on the scene. Fill in all the information.

2. Obtain the name, address, and phone number of witnesses or anyone present at the scene.

3. Ask witnesses to complete and sign witness cards (if provided) or plain-paper witness statements.

4. Note conditions, weather, obstructions, warnings.

5. Write down complaints heard or statements made. Note who made them.

6. Obtain the name and addresses of all persons injured regardless of how minor the injury. Try to learn where the injured will be treated and record this information. Record the name and unit number of EMS units used to transport the injured. Be specific as to which unit transported which patient.

7. Record the names and riding positions of all persons riding on the emergency vehicle at the time of the accident. Record the name and telephone number of the drivers and passengers of all other vehicles involved.

8. Record whether or not drivers and passengers of involved vehicles were wearing passenger restraints at the time of the accident.

• Begin taking photographs of the accident scene.

For Other Types of Accidents

• When conditions permit, stabilize any equipment involved in the accident where there is a chance for further injury. If possible, lock out and tag out any potential sources of energy associated with the accident or near the accident scene. If there is no chance of further injury or damage, do not place personnel in harm's way. Place warning signs promptly and deny access to the area.

• Summon medical assistance if anyone is injured.

• Give aid if needed and only if you are qualified to do so.

• Notify a chief officer or the safety officer as soon as possible and inform them of the situation.

• Report as soon as possible to your supervisor. If the safety officer or a trained investigator will not visit the scene shortly, you must begin the accident investigation.

• Obtain the name, address, and phone number of witnesses or anyone present at the scene.

• Ask witnesses to complete and sign witness cards (if provided) or plain-paper witness statements.

• Note conditions, weather, obstructions, warnings.

• Write down complaints heard or statements made. Note who made them.

• Obtain the name and address of all persons injured regardless of how minor the injury. Learn where the injured will be treated and record this information. Record the name and unit number of EMS units used to transport the injured. Be specific as to which unit transported which patient.

• Record the protective clothing and devices that were in place at the time of the accident. If protective clothing or devices failed or were damaged, secure the items in place and do not move them or tamper with them.

Conclusion

We know that each year there are far too many emergency service providers killed and injured on the job. VFIS believes that almost all of these injuries and deaths are preventable. One of the best tools that we have to enable the prevention of injuries and deaths is the prompt and thorough investigation of all accidents that occur, regardless of whether a death, an injury or serious property damage was the result. It is in the investigation, and specifically in the information gathered during accident investigations, that we may find the solutions to many of the problems which create needless losses.

We must learn that all accidents, even the minor injury accidents and near miss accidents that we may think are not that vital to our understanding of the causes of accidents, offer a potential lesson to be learned. In that respect it is not difficult to say that the unreported accident is automatically a lesson that has gone unlearned.

It is the hope of VFIS that this booklet provides you, the emergency service provider, with the information and tools necessary to conduct thorough and effective accident investigation work.

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2. Kipp, Jonathan D., and Loflin, Murrey E.;"Emergency Incident Risk Management: A Safety and Health Perspective"; Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, New York; 1996; p. 76

3. NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, 1997 Edition; National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, Massachusetts; 1997; Section 2-4

4. Fire Department Occupational Health and Safety Standards Handbook, 1st Edition, Foley, Stephen N., Editor; National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, Massachusetts; 1998; pp. 18, 119-120

5. Dodson, David W.; "Fire Department Incident Safety Officer"; Albany, New York; 1999; pp. 196-204

WITNESSES

1. Name _____
   Address _____
   _____ Phone _____
   Where was witness? _____
2. Name _____
   Address _____
   _____ Phone _____
   Where was witness? _____
3. Name _____
   Address _____
   _____ Phone _____
   Where was witness? _____

PERSONS INJURED

1. Name _____ Age _____
   Address _____
   _____ Phone _____
   Nature of injuries _____
   Where was injured person taken? _____
2. Name _____ Age _____
   Address _____
   _____ Phone _____
   Nature of injuries _____
   Where was injured person taken? _____
3. Name _____ Age _____
   Address _____
   _____ Phone _____
   Nature of injuries _____
   Where was injured person taken? _____

ACCIDENT REPORT

Keep this form in the glove compartment of your car. In case of an accident fill in all available information right at the scene.

#A
DAMAGE TO YOUR VEHICLE

Name of Insured _____
Make of Car _____
Motor No. _____
Driver's Name _____
Address _____
_____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Damage _____
_____
_____
_____
Police Report? _____ Yes _____ No
Name of Police Dept. _____

If witness or witnesses are in another car and refuse to give their names, write down the license number.

License No. _____ License No. _____

#B
DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OF OTHERS

Owner _____ Phone _____
Address _____
_____ State Lic. _____
Make of Car _____ Year _____
Driver _____ Phone _____
Address _____
_____
Chauffeur or Driver's License No. _____
Is other car insured? _____ Name of Co. _____

Damage: NOTE CAREFULLY ______________________

____

____

____

#C
DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OF OTHERS

Owner ______________ Phone ________
Address ______________________
______________ State Lic. ________
Make of Car ______________ Year ______
Driver ______________ Phone ________
Address ______________________
____
Chauffeur or Driver's License No. ______________
Is other car insured? ________ Name of Co. ________
____

Damage: NOTE CAREFULLY ______________________

____

____

____

POINT OF IMPACT

CHECK (X) FOR EACH VEHICLE

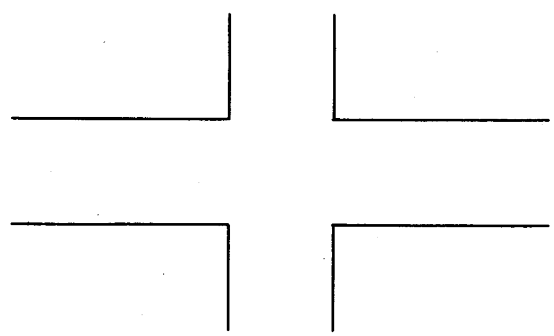
A (YOUR VEHICLE)	B	C		A (YOUR VEHICLE)	B	C	
☐	☐	☐	Front	☐	☐	☐	Lt. Side
☐	☐	☐	Rt. Front	☐	☐	☐	Rear
☐	☐	☐	Lt. Front	☐	☐	☐	Rt. Rear
☐	☐	☐	Rt. Side	☐	☐	☐	Lt. Rear

DETAILS OF ACCIDENT

Date ______________ Time ________
Place of Accident (name streets) ______________
____
Road surface and condition ______________
Weather conditions ______________
____

	OUR CAR	OTHER CAR
Going Which Direction		
Speed (Miles per Hour)		
Which Side of Street		
Distance From Curb		
Signals (Horn or Hand)		

Indicate point of collision and briefly describe what happened: ______________



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(Additional Remarks cont'd.):

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____

Signature

Appendix 1

DRIVER'S ACCIDENT REPORTING PACKET

Contains:

Accident Report
Witness Cards

WHEN AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS, STOP:

1. Aid the injured.
2. Notify Central Dispatch and advise of injuries. Central Dispatch should (a) notify police, (b) notify our headquarters, (c) notify medical aid to respond.
3. Obtain name and address of investigating police officer and badge number.
4. Obtain facts about damages to your vehicle.
5. Obtain facts about damages to other vehicle(s) and/or property damaged.
6. Get witnesses. Pass out witness cards and collect upon completion.
7. Obtain facts about injured person(s).
8. Describe the accident on the accident report.
9. Call you local insurance agent to report accident.
10. Do not discuss the accident except with police, or with your insurance company representative.

FURNISHED THROUGH THE COURTESY OF

VFIS

183 Leader Heights Road
P.O. Box 2726
York, Pennsylvania 17405
(717) 741-0911
(800) 233-1957

C10:031 Rev. 4/95

WITNESS CARD

Date of Accident _____ Location _____

How did the accident occur? _____

_____

Was anyone injured? _____

What was your involvement in the accident? _____

_____

Name of Witness _____ Date _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

Name of Insured _____

Glatfelter Insurance Group

THANK YOU!

717-741-0911

Item No. A06:001 (REV 1/88)

Appendix 2

Vehicle Accident/Loss Investigation Report

(This is not a claim form)

Fire Department _____ Date _____

Address _____

Name of Driver _____ Vehicle ID/Unit Number _____

Type of Vehicle _____

Date Driver Last Certified On Above Vehicle _____

Date of Accident _____ Time _____ Date Reported _____

Location of Accident _____

Roadway

- ☐ Straight
- ☐ Curve
- ☐ On Grade
- ☐ Level
- ☐ Hillcrest
- ☐ Dry
- ☐ Wet
- ☐ Muddy
- ☐ Snowy
- ☐ Icy
- ☐ Oily
- ☐ 2-lane
- ☐ 3-lane
- ☐ 4-lane
- ☐ Divided
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Lanes marked
- ☐ Lanes unmarked
- ☐ No road defects
- ☐ Holes, ruts, etc.
- ☐ Loose material
- ☐ Other _____

Accident Occurred:

- ☐ At station
- ☐ Responding to emergency
- ☐ At emergency scene
- ☐ Returning from emergency
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Convention or parade
- ☐ Other _____

Type of Loss

- ☐ Personal injury
- ☐ Property damage
- ☐ Vehicle damage

Weather

- ☐ Clear
- ☐ Rain
- ☐ Snow
- ☐ Sleet
- ☐ Fog
- ☐ Other _____

Description Of Accident _____

_____

_____

_____

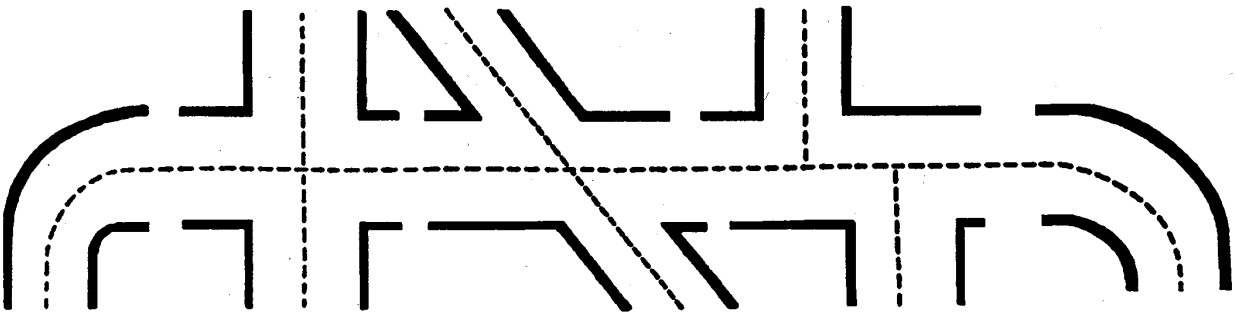
_____

_____

Motor Vehicle Diagram

Complete the following diagram showing direction and positions of automobiles involved, designating clearly point of contact.

Indicate North ↑



Instructions:

1. Show vehicles and direction of travel
2. Use solid line to show path of each vehicle before accident ▭▷ dotted line after accident...

Give Street Names and Directions

Your Vehicle ◀▬

Other Vehicle ◁1 ◁2

Appendix 2

Safety Analysis

What acts, failures to act and/or conditions contributed most directly to this accident? (Immediate Cause)

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are the basic or fundamental reasons for the existence of these acts and/or conditions? (Fundamental Cause)

_____

_____

_____

What action has or will be taken to prevent recurrence? Place "X" by items completed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Safety Supervisor's Comments _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Driver's Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____

Safety Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 3

Infectious Exposure Form

Exposed Member's Name: _____ Position: _____

Soc. Sec. #: _____ Home Phone: _____

Field Inc. #: _____ Shift: _____ Company: _____

Name of Patient: _____ Sex: _____

Age: _____ Address: _____

Suspected or Confirmed Disease: _____

Transported to: _____

Transported by: _____

Date of Exposure: _____ Time of Exposure: _____

Type of Incident (auto accident, trauma): _____

Type of protective equipment utilized: _____

What where you exposed to:

Blood _____ Tears _____ Feces _____ Urine _____ Saliva _____

Vomitus _____ Sputum _____ Sweat _____ Other _____

What part(s) of your body became exposed? Be specific: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Did you have any open cuts, sores, or rashes that became exposed? Be specific: _____

_____

_____

How did exposure occur? Be specific: _____

_____

_____

Did you seek medical attention? _____Yes _____No

Where? _____ Date: _____

Contact Infection Control Supervisor: Date_____ Time: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Member's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3

Infection Control Supervisor's Report

Medical facility notified? Yes _____ No _____

If Yes:

Name of Facility: _____ Date: _____

Address of Facility: _____

Name of Facility Contact: _____

Confirmed Exposure: _____

Member notified? Yes _____ No _____

Member's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Medical Follow-Up Action:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Remarks:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Infection Control Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 4

Incident Exposure Record

Name _____

Date of Birth _____ Social Security Number _____

Incident Number _____ Incident Date _____

Officer In Charge _____

Location Of Incident _____

Description Of Incident _____

_____

_____

_____

Type Of Exposure: Inhalation _____

Direct Contact _____

Ingestion _____

Materials Exposed To _____

_____

Type Of Decontamination _____

Length Of Exposure (time) _____

Symptoms (if any) _____

_____

Treatment At Scene _____

_____

Name Of Medical Facility _____

Treatment Rendered _____

Protective Clothing and Equipment Used During Incident (list) _____

_____

_____

Additional Information _____

_____

_____

Firefighter/EMS Signature _____ Date _____

Chief's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 4

Safety Officer's Analysis

What acts, failures to act and/or conditions contributed most directly to this accident? (Immediate Cause)

What are the basic or fundamental reasons for the existence of these acts and/or conditions? (Fundamental Cause)

What action has or will be taken to prevent recurrence? Place "X" by items completed.

Safety Officer's Comments

Safety Officer's Signature Date

Appendix 5

PERSONAL INJURY/ILLNESS INVESTIGATION REPORT

Emergency Service Organization_____ Date_____

Address_____

Name of Injured_____ Date of Birth_____

Address of Injured_____

Phone( )_____ Age_____ Sex_____ Height_____ Weight_____

Occupation_____ Job Title_____

Social Security Number_____ Years with Dept._____

Date of Injury_____ Time of Injury_____

Date Reported_____ Time Reported_____

Accident Reported To_____

Nature of Injury

- ☐ Fractures
- ☐ Inflammation
- ☐ Infectious Disease
- ☐ Frostbite, Cold Exposure
- ☐ Pinched Nerve, Ruptured Disk
- ☐ Electric Shock
- ☐ Chemical Injury
- ☐ Multiple Injury
- ☐ Recurrence
- ☐ Strain, Sprain, Torn Ligament
- ☐ Cuts, Lacerations, Punctures
- ☐ Inhalation, Fumes
- ☐ Inhalation, Smoke
- ☐ Heat Exhaustion, Fatigue
- ☐ Abrasions, Contusions, Bruises
- ☐ Heart Malfunction
- ☐ Eye Injury
- ☐ Burns
- ☐ Other _____

Parts of Body Affected

- ☐ Multiple Parts
- ☐ Head
- ☐ Eye(s)
- ☐ Ear(s)
- ☐ Neck
- ☐ Shoulder
- ☐ Chest
- ☐ Lung
- ☐ Abdomen
- ☐ Back
- ☐ Heart
- ☐ Groin
- ☐ Arm
- ☐ Hand
- ☐ Finger
- ☐ Leg(s)
- ☐ Knee(s)
- ☐ Ankle(s)
- ☐ Foot/Feet
- ☐ Ribs
- ☐ Hip
- ☐ Other _____

Where Injury Occurred

- ☐ Station Maintenance
- ☐ Apparatus Maintenance
- ☐ Emergency Scene
- ☐ Private Auto to Emergency
- ☐ Private Auto Non-Emergency
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Convention
- ☐ Emergency Vehicle to Emergency
- ☐ Emergency Vehicle Non-Emergency
- ☐ Parades, Picnics, Contests
- ☐ Standing By Station for Call
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Auxiliary Services
- ☐ Responding/Returning to Emergency (Non-Vehicle)
- ☐ Other _____

Cause of Injury

- ☐ Fall
- ☐ Weather
- ☐ Making Safety Devices Inoperative
- ☐ Using Defective Equipment
- ☐ Using Equipment Improperly
- ☐ Failure to Use Personal Protection Equipment
- ☐ Struck By Object
- ☐ Improper Lifting
- ☐ Horseplay
- ☐ Structural Collapse
- ☐ Inadequate Guards or Protection
- ☐ Back Draft
- ☐ Improper Placement
- ☐ Civil Disturbance
- ☐ Inadequate Illumination
- ☐ Inadequate Ventilation
- ☐ Lack of Knowledge or Skill
- ☐ Irrational Civilian
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Abuse or Misuse
- ☐ Other _____

Injury Occurred - Performing What Task?

- ☐ Forcible Entry
- ☐ Using Ladders
- ☐ Advancing/Directing Hose Line
- ☐ Ventilating
- ☐ Overhauling
- ☐ Salvage
- ☐ Servicing/Repairing Equipment
- ☐ Extrication
- ☐ Rescue Operation
- ☐ Administering Medical Aid
- ☐ Physical Fitness
- ☐ Other _____

Witness(es) to Injury: _____

Injured Person's Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix 5

INVESTIGATION REPORT

Thoroughly describe accident: (What, How, Where, Equipment, Activity, etc.) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Hospitalized or Treated, Where? (Include Address)_____

_____

Name and Address of Physician: (Include Referral)_____

_____

Did the injury require individual to perform limited duties, or to be assigned to other duties or positions? YES or NO If yes, what duties or position? _____

And, what period of time? _____

Investigated by _____ Title _____ Date _____

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT:

What Acts, Failures to Act and/or Conditions Contributed Most Directly to This Accident? (Immediate Cause)

_____

_____

_____

What Are the Basic or Fundamental Reasons for the Existence of These Acts and/or Conditions? (Fundamental Cause)

_____

_____

_____

What Action Has or Will Be Taken to Prevent Recurrence? Place "X" By Items Completed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reviewed by Safety Officer_____ Title _____ Date _____

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