



## Queen's University Environmental Health & Safety

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### 1. Introduction:

This Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure was developed by the Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) in accordance with the University Policy Statement on Health and Safety.

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), the Ontario Electrical Safety Code and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA) by having all incidents documented and reported to the appropriate bodies. This procedure will ensure that all employees and supervisors are aware of their reporting obligations and the steps to be taken in the event of an incident. It ensures incidents are investigated to identify underlying causes of accidents or near misses and determine the corrective actions needed to prevent further occurrences. It must be noted that failure to report could lead to ramifications under the OHSA and the WSIA.

Also, some questions in the Incident Reporting Form reflect regulatory reporting requirements, and data that must be reported to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD).

### 2. Scope

This SOP applies throughout the University and all off campus sites where university related work or academic activities are taking place. This SOP applies to all faculty, staff and students who are undertaking studies, doing research, or carrying out any other work that takes place off-campus and is under the purview of the University.

This SOP also includes incidents where an employee is working remotely. In these cases, as per the WSIA, incidents are required to be reported and reviewed for work-relatedness.

Incidents or near misses involving students, visitors, or outside contractors will be investigated in the same manner as employees.

### 3. Applicable Legislation

- Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act - R.S.O. 1990
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act - 1997
- Ontario Electrical Safety Code



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#### 4. Definitions

Incident:

Any unplanned or undesired event, no matter how minor, which results in harm to one or more individuals; and/or has the potential to cause harm or damage. Incidents include near miss, property damage, injury or illness resulting in first aid, an exposure, health care, any lost time after the day of injury, or a critical injury or fatality.

Critical Injury:

Under the OHSA, a critical injury is defined as an injury of a serious nature that:

- a) places life in jeopardy.
- b) produces unconsciousness.
- c) results in substantial loss of blood.
- d) involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a single finger or toe.
- e) involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand, or foot but not a single finger or toe.
- f) consists of burns to a major portion of the body; or
- g) causes the loss of sight in an eye.

Electrical Equipment:

Any apparatus, appliance, device, instrument, fitting, fixture, machinery, material, or thing used in or for, or capable of being used in or for, the generation, transformation, transmission, distribution, supply, or utilization of electric power or energy, and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes any assemblage, or combination of materials or things which is used, or is capable of being used or adapted, to serve or perform any particular purpose or function when connected to an electrical installation, notwithstanding that any of such materials or things may be mechanical, metallic, or non-electric in origin.

First Aid:

This is a one-time treatment or care such as cleaning a cut, apply bandage or apply a cold compress. No further medical attention is required.

Health Care:

When an individual seeks health care services beyond first aid. This is a professional skill or service of a health care practitioner, any service or test at a health facility, or prescriptions.

Lost Time:

When an employee is absent from work or unable to work, after the day of a work-related accident. This is typically the next day or next scheduled shift after the accident but can also be a later date. This does not include the day of the incident/accident.



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### Near Miss:

An incident that has occurred in which no personal injury was sustained, but where injury easily could have occurred, given a slight shift in time or position.

### Occupational Illness or Disease:

Under OHSA this is defined as a condition that results from exposure in the workplace to a physical, chemical, or biological agent to the extent that the normal physiological mechanisms are affected, and the health of the individual is impaired.

### Property Damage:

While investigating an incident, it may be found that property damage occurred during a near miss or incident resulting in injury and therefore should be documented on the Incident Report Form. If the property damage may require an Insurance claim, contact [Queen's Insurance](#). Due to a variety of factors, a monetary value is difficult to specify significant damage. Contact Office of [Risk and Safety Services, Insurance](#) for information.

### Serious Electrical Incident:

A serious electrical incident is defined as:

- Any electrical contact which causes death or critical injury to a person, or
- Any fire or any explosion or any condition suspected of being electrical in origin which might have caused a fire, explosion, loss of life, critical injury to a person, or property damage, or
- Any electrical contact with electrical equipment operating at over 750 volts, or
- Any explosion or fire of electrical equipment operating at over 750 volts.

### Student-Staff:

A student who has an employment relationship with the university, who may or may not be receiving a payment for work. Examples are Teaching Assistant, Residence Don, work placement students, etc.

### Workplace:

Any place in or at which a member of the University community is required to be present in the course of their work.

### Work Relatedness:

A personal injury by accident or an illness that occurs in the course of employment if the surrounding circumstances relating to place, time and activity indicate that the accident was work related. (e.g. is caused by a work-related task or environment)



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## 5. Responsibilities:

### 5.1 Responsibilities of Department Heads

- Ensure that this SOP is distributed, implemented, and complied with in all facilities under their authority.
- Ensure that supervisors, employees, students, and volunteers are aware of and understand this SOP and the procedures to follow in the event of an incident.
- Ensure that supervisors are supported in following all procedures, especially in a case of a serious or critical injury.
- Assist in the implementation of recommendations from incident investigations when departmental resources are required.
- Follow the responsibilities of a Supervisor if the injured person reports to the Department Head.

### 5.2 Responsibilities of Supervisors

- Ensure that all employees and students under their supervision are aware of this SOP and understand the procedures to follow in the event of an incident.
- Ensure that transportation is arranged for the injured worker to their home or to health facility if an ambulance is not required.
- Ensure that if incident is serious, or a critical injury occurs, that the scene is not disturbed until a full investigation is completed.
- Ensure employees are paid for a full shift on the day of injury.
- Ensure all incidents and resulting medical attention or lost time are documented and promptly reported to EHS.
- Ensure that incident causes are investigated, corrective actions determined and then taken to eliminate or control hazards to reduce potential recurrence.

### 5.3 Responsibilities of Departmental Safety Officer

- Ensure they receive and keep a copy of all Incident Reports that have occurred in their department.
- Assist Supervisors, when necessary, to ensure a copy of all Incident reports are sent promptly in a confidential/secure manner to EHS.
- Assist, when necessary, with ensuring that incident causes are investigated, actions are determined and then taken to eliminate or control hazards to reduce potential recurrence.



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### 5.4 Responsibility of Employee/Student

- Review and understand this SOP and the steps to follow when an incident occurs.
- Report all incidents they are involved with immediately to their supervisor, acting supervisor, or Departmental Safety Officer if Supervisor is not available.
- Report potential hazards to their supervisor. Hazards should be reported in accordance with (SOP-Safety-23) Hazard Reporting.
- Employees involved in a work-related injury resulting in medical attention or lost time need to complete a WSIB Form 6 (Workers Report). In accordance with legislation, a copy must be provided to their supervisor and EHS.

### 5.5 Responsibilities of the Department of Environmental Health & Safety

- Review this SOP from periodically and revise as necessary.
- Review all incident reports promptly to determine work-relatedness and further reporting requirements based on applicable legislation.
- Investigate incidents where EHS involvement is deemed necessary.
- Complete and submit within the reporting timelines, the WSIB Employers Report of Injury (Form 7), if the incident is deemed to be reportable under the WSIA.
- Ensure the Return-to-Work Services Unit in Human Resources receives the needed injury details promptly when the incident results in Lost Time or modified work.
- According to the WSIA, provide a copy of the submitted WSIB Form 7 to the injured employee.
- According to applicable legislation, distribute details of work-related incidents resulting in lost time or medical attention to the applicable Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) and Union.

### 5.6 Responsibilities of Human Resources, Return to Work Services

- When injury details are received from EHS and based on HR Return to Work Services policies, will manage early and safe return to work for injured employees.

### 5.7 Responsibilities of the Joint Health and Safety Committees

- As outlined in the Terms of Reference for JHSCs, review incident details, identify areas of concern and make recommendations for corrective action, as necessary.
- In accordance with legislation, and when necessary, as detailed in the Terms of Reference for JHSCs, a certified JHSC member will participate in investigations of serious or Critical Incidents.



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## 6. Record Keeping

Incident reports, subsequent investigation reports and all WSIB correspondence and documents will be maintained and filed by EHS in accordance with the university's record retention policy.

## 7. Incident Reporting Process

### **First Aid/ Near Miss/ Hazardous Situation / Exposure**

- If a person requires first aid, it should be provided by a trained person in the area. If first aid treatment is not immediately available, call the Emergency Report Centre at 533-6111 for assistance.
- If an employee/student/visitor receives first aid, is involved in a near miss incident or observes a hazardous situation, they should immediately inform their direct supervisor or safety officer if the supervisor is not available. Hazard Reporting should occur following the procedures outlined in ([SOP-Safety-23](#)) [Hazard Reporting](#).
- Supervisor shall investigate the incident to determine the root cause. See Section 8 for more detail.
- The supervisor, with the assistance of the departmental safety officer, shall determine what action is required to correct or remove the hazard and determine the target date for completion.
- All cases of First Aid provided must be documented and reported. The supervisor shall complete the [Incident Report Form](#) found on the EHS website.
- Property damage that may require an Insurance claim needs to be reported to [Queen's Insurance](#)
- The Incident Report form shall be submitted in a confidential/secure manner to EHS, with a copy maintained by the departmental safety officer. The form must be submitted within 24 hours or next business day through [Incident Report Upload tool](#), e-mailed to [safety@queensu.ca](mailto:safety@queensu.ca) or hand delivered to EHS office staff.
- If the investigation cannot be completed immediately, the Incident Report form shall be sent to EHS promptly, and then investigative results and corrective action taken shall be forwarded once determined.
- EHS may investigate the incident further.

### **Health Care/Lost Time**

- If any incident requires Health Care, a witness or another individual who discovered the accident shall immediately contact the Emergency Report Centre at 533-6111 or 911. They shall stay with the injured person until medical assistance



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has arrived.

- If not done so already they shall contact the supervisor and/or departmental safety officer for the area.
- If the employee/student/visitor seeks health care later, they shall contact their supervisor as soon as possible to advise.
- If an employee is unable to work (absent) on any day after an incident due to a work-related injury, the employee shall contact the supervisor immediately to advise. This will be considered Lost Time due to injury.
- Within 24 hours (or the next business day) of learning of medical attention or lost time due to injury, the supervisor shall complete the [Incident Report Form](#) and investigate to determine the root cause of the incident. See Section 8 for further information on conducting investigations.
- In the case of workplace injuries, fines may be levied by the WSIB for late filing of reports. These fines may be recovered from the departments dependent on cause of delay in reporting.
- The supervisor (with the assistance of the departmental safety officer) shall determine what action is required to correct or remove hazard, determine the target date for completion.
- The Incident Report form shall be submitted in a confidential/secure manner to EHS, with a copy maintained by the departmental safety officer. The form must be submitted within 24 hours or next business day through [Incident Report Upload tool](#), e-mailed to [safety@queensu.ca](mailto:safety@queensu.ca) or hand delivered to EHS office staff.
- If the investigation cannot be completed immediately, the form shall be sent to EHS promptly, and the investigative results and corrective action taken shall be forwarded once determined.
- EHS may investigate the incident further.
- If required, EHS shall complete WSIB Form 7 for work related incidents and provide a copy to the injured employee.
- Employees involved in a work-related injury requiring health care or lost time after day of injury will need to complete a [WSIB Form 6](#) (Worker's report) and provide a copy to their supervisor and EHS.
- EHS shall send injury details to HR, Return to Work Services if there is Lost time greater than 3 days or modified duties are required. HR will manage the safe and early return to work based on their policies.
- As required by the OSHA, EHS shall send incident details to the JHSC for that area, and union, if applicable.

### **Critical Injury/Death/Serious Electrical Incident**

- If there is a critical injury, death or serious electrical injury, a witness or another individual who discovered the accident shall immediately contact the Emergency





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Report Centre at 533-6111, or 911. They shall stay with the injured person until medical assistance has arrived. If not done so already they shall contact the supervisor and/or departmental safety officer.

- The supervisor and/or departmental safety officer shall secure the scene until Campus Security and Emergency Services and/or EHS arrive.
- As required by the OHSA, the site must be secured to preserve all relevant evidence by keeping the integrity of the scene and not allowing anyone to:
  - alter or remove evidence, except for the purpose of saving life or relieving human suffering; maintaining an essential public utility service or a public transportation system or preventing unnecessary damage to equipment or other property,
  - interfere with, disturb, destroy, alter, or carry away any wreckage, article, or thing at the scene or connected with the occurrence until permission to do has been given by an MLTSD inspector.
- EHS shall contact the MLTSD and in the case of a serious electrical incident they shall also contact the Inspection Department of the Electrical Safety Authority
- EHS shall contact a certified worker member of the JHSC and advise them of the accident.
- EHS and the worker member of the JHSC shall investigate the incident and shall send a report (in the prescribed format) to the MLTSD.
- If necessary, EHS and the worker member of the JHSC shall assist the MLTSD inspector with their investigation.
- EHS shall complete WSIB Form 7 and provide a copy to the injured employee.
- EHS shall send details to the JHSC for that area, and to the union, if applicable.

### **Chemical, Radiological or Biohazardous Spills, Fire or Explosion**

- If the incident resulted in a spilled chemical, radiological, or biohazardous material, the EHS must be contacted at 32999 and a [Spill report](#) must also be completed.
- If the incident resulted in a fire and/or explosion, contact EHS immediately to report. EHS may investigate.
- If the spill resulted in an injury to a worker, student or visitor please follow the appropriate Incident Reporting Process section above.
- EHS will notify all necessary external agencies. (e.g. Minister of the Environment, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission).

### **8. Incident Investigation**

Investigations of workplace incidents must be completed to:

- Meet legislated requirements.





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- Determine what happened and why.
- Determine what actions are needed to prevent recurrences by eliminating or removing hazards.

When accidents occur, they are an opportunity to learn from situation. Supervisors should investigate to determine what happened and the reasons why. Collect information to find what led to the immediate causes to establish the sequence of events. Information may disappear or deteriorate over time therefore investigations should be done immediately. Information can be collected as physical items, diagrams or sketches, photos, documentation, or witness statements. Use a series of questions that reveal facts about the incident or problem answering who was involved, what equipment or task is involved, when, where exactly, how was the individual affected (injury) or what equipment was affected.

Once information is collected, analyze the data, and classify into categories of task, material, environment, personnel, and management. These categories will help to determine what actions can be made to remove or decrease hazards.

### Root Causes

Seldom, if ever, is there only a single cause for an incident. Investigations should be asking "why" 5 times to find the immediate causes and ultimately the root cause.

For example, an investigation which concludes that an accident was due to an individual's carelessness and goes no further, fails to seek answers to several important questions such as:

- Why did this incident happen?
- Was the individual distracted? If yes, why was the worker distracted?
- Was a safe work procedure being followed? If not, why not?
- Were safety devices in order? If not, why not?
- Was the individual trained? If not, why not?

An inquiry that answers these and related questions will probably reveal conditions that are more open to correction than attempts to prevent "carelessness".

### Task

Here the actual work procedure being used at the time of the accident is explored. For most of these questions, an important follow-up question is "If not, why not?" Those investigating the incident should look for answers to questions such as:

- Was a safe work procedure used?
- Had conditions changed to make the normal procedure unsafe?



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- Were the appropriate tools and materials available?
- Were they used?
- Were safety devices working properly?
- Was lockout used when necessary?

### **Material and Equipment**

To seek out possible causes resulting from the equipment and materials used, investigators might ask these questions. Again, each time the answer reveals an unsafe condition, the investigator must ask why this situation could exist.

- Was there an equipment failure?
- What caused it to fail?
- Was the machinery poorly designed?
- Were hazardous substances involved?
- Were they clearly identified?
- Was a less hazardous alternative substance possible and available?
- Was the raw material substandard in some way?
- Should personal protective equipment (PPE) have been used?
- Was the PPE used?
- Were users of PPE properly trained?

### **Environment**

The physical environment, and especially sudden changes to that environment, are factors that need to be identified. The situation at the time of the accident is what is important, not what the "usual" conditions were. For example, accident investigators may want to know:

- What were the weather conditions?
- Was poor housekeeping a problem?
- Was it too hot or too cold?
- Was noise a problem?
- Was there adequate light?
- Were toxic or hazardous gases, dusts, or fumes present?

### **Personnel**

The physical and mental condition of those individuals directly involved in the event must be explored. The purpose for investigating the accident is not to establish blame against someone but the inquiry will not be complete unless personal characteristics are considered. Some factors will remain essentially constant while others may vary from day to day:



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- Were workers experienced in the work being done?
- Had they been adequately trained?
- Can they physically do the work?
- What was the status of their health?
- Were they tired?
- Were they under stress (work or personal)?

### **Management and Management Systems**

Management holds the legal responsibility for the safety of the workplace and therefore the role of supervisors and higher management and the role or presence of management systems must always be considered in an accident investigation. Failures of management systems are often found to be direct or indirect factors in accidents. Ask questions such as:

- Were safety rules communicated to and understood by all employees?
- Were written procedures and orientation available?
- Were they being enforced?
- Was there adequate supervision?
- Were workers trained to do the work?
- Had hazards been previously identified?
- Had procedures been developed to overcome them?
- Were unsafe conditions corrected?
- Was regular maintenance of equipment carried out?
- Were regular safety inspections carried out?

### **Analyze Factors, Determine Actions, Recommendations**

Once the root cause(s) of the incident have been determined, Supervisors must determine the corrective actions that will prevent a reoccurrence.

An implementation timeline for the corrective actions should be developed for those items that cannot be corrected immediately.

The results of the investigation and the corrective actions to be implemented must be recorded on the incident report. If the incident report has already been submitted to EHS, an amended form must be submitted.

Information on the corrective actions, including the timelines for completion, must be reported to the employee, and any others, involved in the incident.



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### Revision History:

2013 August – Initial Release

2021 June – New Incident Report Form and change to reporting procedures