

Leadership Endorsement of Incident Investigation Program

Items in brackets [] should be customized to the terminology and objectives of the organization. The generic letter is intended to accommodate safety, reliability, and quality objectives.

One of the challenges we face as an organization is to continue our efforts to improve our [overall/safety/reliability/quality] performance. In order to achieve our goal of [an accident-free workplace/improved reliability/improved quality], we need to not only eliminate the [incidents /loss events] themselves, but also the underlying conditions that create the potential for them to occur.

If we are going to be successful in accomplishing this, it is critical that we determine the root causes of these [incidents/loss events]. We must go beyond addressing the symptoms, to address the underlying root causes of these [incidents/loss events]. Unless we are confident that the root causes are identified and actions are taken to eliminate them, we cannot be confident in our long-term risk reduction efforts.

We have begun taking steps to improve the process we use for investigating [incidents/loss events]. Recently, we provided training to ?? individuals in a structured process for investigating [incidents /events/issues] and identifying their underlying causes. It is important for everyone to understand the intent of this process is not to find fault or place blame. It is, by design, a process for identifying failures or weaknesses associated with [safety] organizational systems. Once the root causes are identified, we will develop recommendations to eliminate the root causes and set individuals up to succeed in future operations. Punishment of employees involved in investigations will NOT occur unless they are involved in illegal activities such as use of drugs, stealing, or sabotage.

This new process will be used not only for [accidents/incidents involving injury/significant losses], but for near misses. Near misses are incidents in which [no one is seriously injured/there are no significant losses] but there is a potential for more [serious injury/serious losses].

We have already started performing root cause analyses using the personnel we have recently trained. This requires that those individuals be released from their normal duties to collect information, conduct interviews, analyze the incidents, determine the root causes, and develop recommendations. As a result, other people will need to fill in for those conducting the investigations or, in some cases, work may get delayed. Preventing [someone else from getting hurt/further losses] far outweighs the temporary inconvenience resulting from the person's participation in the investigation process. As people conduct more investigations, the time required for investigations will decrease.

We, as members of the [company/division/plant] leadership team, support this investigation process and ask that all of our personnel support the efforts of their co-workers when they are asked to participate.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact [program champion].

Signed,

The Leadership Team