**Objective:** To identify typical phases of incident investigations for those who conduct them

The goal of an accurate and thorough incident investigation is not to place blame, but to determine the true cause of the incident and make changes that reduce the chances of similar incidents occurring in the future.

Make sure your investigation includes each of the phases below to assure that your team has every opportunity to uncover all root causes.

**Responding to the Incident**

* **Check the scene for hazards** to yourself and others.
* If you can do so safely, **control hazards or remove people from the hazards.**
* **Respond to medical needs:** if necessary, summon helpby calling emergency medical services (EMS) and/or provide first aid to the level you are trained.
* **Secure the area** if necessary to prevent further injury or disruption of evidence.
* **Contact the appropriate personnel,** such as supervisors, management, or emergency responders, after injured parties are medically stable.
* **Start preserving evidence** that may be needed for the investigation, including photographing or isolating evidence that may not be able to be removed from the scene.

**Gathering Information**

* **Include both management and employees** in the investigation. Multiple perspectives are invaluable.
* Make sure that the investigation team includes or has access to **technical expertise** in safety, engineering, operations, or any other subjects that might be helpful.
* **Focus on finding causes** for the issue rather than assigning blame.
* **Collect as much data as possible** by interviewing personnel involved in the incident (including witnesses) and documenting the entire incident site (i.e., with photographs or video). The more information you have, the easier it will be to see the big picture.

**Analyzing the Data**

* Look for **root causes**. A root cause is a factor that underlies other contributing causes and that could eliminate recurrence of the problem if it is addressed.
* Rather than just focusing on the actions of the people involved in the incident, try to consider the organization as a whole and whether there are any weaknesses in the current procedures that may have contributed to the incident.
* Using multiple methods of data analysis, such as **Ishikawa (fishbone) diagrams** or the **Why Method,** can help uncover root causes that may have been missed using only one.

**Determining Corrective Actions**

Once all root causes of the incident have been determined, recommend corrective actions that can help minimize or eliminate the chances of reoccurrence.

* **Be specific** in your instructions for what each action entails and how it should be implemented.
* **Assign** responsible parties to ensure that the corrective actions are completed and a time frame for completion.
* Keep your recommendations **constructive and objective**.
* Clearly point out instances where human error is a cause, but **avoid recommending disciplinary actions**, which should be handled by Human Resources.
* **Outline a follow-up plan** to assure that actions are implemented correctly and work as planned.

This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

Organization: Date:

Trainer: Trainer’s Signature:

**Class Participants:**

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

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