



## Accident and incident investigation procedure

### Background

1. The aim of this procedure is to provide a consistent, methodical and structured approach to accident and incident investigation across the Council. This is essential so that lessons can be learnt, improvements made and further accidents and incidents prevented, so employee health and well-being is protected.
2. The Council is required by law to make sure accidents and incidents are investigated. Doing this properly will also help us to deal with civil claims.
3. Accident and incident investigation also has a sound business case. It helps to prevent losses to the Council, maintain good staff morale and protect our public and client image.
4. Managers are responsible for making sure accident and incident reporting and investigation take place. This is required by the Council's:
  - Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent
  - Accident, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Policy and Guidance
  - Abuse, Aggression and Violence Policy and Guidance.
5. The term manager within our health and safety (H&S) policies and guidance means anyone who has responsibility for managing employees, including school-based staff.

### Training and information

6. The Health and Safety Team (HST) run a half-day training course to help managers. It's now mandatory for all managers, plus acting and deputy managers, supervisors and team leaders to attend this training every three years. We've also developed a short e-learning course that can be used as a refresher or for general staff awareness. You can find more information about this requirement in our Health and Safety Training Policy.
7. All corporate H&S policy, guidance and training programme documents are available on:
  - [iDerby](#). To find them from the homepage go to Occupational Health and Safety and then choose an appropriate theme.
  - the [Schools' Information Portal](#) (SIP).

8. You can also get copies from the Health and Safety Team (HST) by:
- calling **64 0748** or
  - emailing [employee.HealthandSafety@derby.gov.uk](mailto:employee.HealthandSafety@derby.gov.uk).

Managers with employees who can't access iDerby or the SIP must set up alternative arrangements to make sure they get appropriate H&S information. This might be by printing information off and circulating it or handing out copies at team meetings.

### When to investigate

9. You must investigate all accidents, incidents and near misses that:
- involve employees, agency workers, subcontractors, and self-employed people working directly for the Council
  - affect members of the public
  - had the potential to cause significant injury or business loss and where the circumstances are likely to occur again.

### The level of investigation

10. More serious accidents and incidents will need more in-depth investigation and possibly the involvement of HST and senior management. Here's a guide to help you decide the appropriate level of investigation...
- **Minimal level** - where the potential for serious injury is low and the circumstances are unlikely to occur again. Investigate and use the F2508 accident report form Part F to describe the practical action you'll take to prevent a recurrence.
  - **Low level** - where there's potential for serious injury and absence, but the chance of the circumstances happening again is unlikely. Carry out a brief investigation to find out the root cause of the accident. Then review the relevant risk assessments and amend any working procedures and arrangements, as necessary.
  - **Medium level** - where there's potential for a serious injury and absence, plus a recurrence is possible, or even certain. Also, where there's potential for major injury, but the circumstances are unlikely to occur again. Investigation at this level must involve the relevant manager, a health and safety adviser and, where possible, a trade union representative.
  - **High level** - where there's potential for major injury and a recurrence is possible or even certain. Also, for all fatal or potentially fatal accidents and incidents. These investigations must be carried out by the **senior manager responsible for the service**, such as the Head of Service or Service Director and a health and safety adviser.

**Remember** - you must also report all fatal and potentially fatal accidents and incidents involving employees and members of the public under the Council's Serious Incident Policy, and follow the

procedure in this. However, this **isn't** a substitute for action needed under this procedure.

## Sequence of events

11. As an investigating officer, your first task is to make sure the scene of the accident or incident is preserved. Next, you must gather detailed information about the circumstances involved. These must include:
  - a description of the environment and conditions at the time of the accident or incident. Remember to include details, such as the condition of flooring, any spillages that may have contributed, any weather conditions that may have had an impact etc.
  - details of the person or people involved
  - details of any witnesses
  - information on any tools, machinery, equipment and vehicles that were involved
  - copies of relevant documents, such as risk assessments, training records, method statements, safe working procedures and equipment test certificates
  - photographs, drawings or sketches of the scene.
12. Make sure you speak with anyone involved in the accident or incident **as soon as possible** to establish exactly what happened.
13. Any machinery, equipment, tools and vehicles involved must be checked and tested by a competent person **before** they're used again.
14. You must also consider organisational arrangements and background circumstances, such as:
  - the level of supervision available at the time
  - the training, skills, knowledge and experience of those involved
  - any work targets that could have had an impact
  - the health and safety culture, including any peer pressures within the service.
15. Make sure you collect enough information to allow you to establish the full chain of events. Bear in mind that the time and effort you spend should be proportionate to the **potential** of the accident or incident, rather than the actual outcome. Use the checklists in the attached Appendix to help you with your investigation. They range from the emergency response through the initial investigation, and finally the deeper investigation.

## Conclusions

16. Use the sequence of events and the evidence provided by witnesses to try to establish the root cause of the accident or incident. Make sure you explain any opinions you arrive at clearly, along with the reasons why you have them. There may be several interacting factors and circumstances involved. If so, make sure this is mentioned in your conclusions.

17. Your conclusions should also highlight any underlying trends or behaviours that have contributed to the event. Also, try to think about any wider implications your conclusions may have for other services. Make sure you pass on any lessons learnt.

### **Recommendations**

18. These should be the actions you identify as necessary to prevent, or reduce the chances of a similar accident or incident happening again. They could be physical precautions, changes to organisational arrangements, new working practices, training or a combination of all of these.
19. Make sure you discuss your recommendations with your manager, employees and trade union health and safety representatives.
20. The appropriate management team or directorate management team should monitor accident and incident investigation reports, and make sure their recommendations are actioned within appropriate timescales.

### **Implementing recommendations**

21. Managers must:
  - review service risk assessments in light of investigation reports
  - implement all recommendations
  - report progress back to their management team.
22. Managers must also make sure they tell employees about:
  - investigation report findings and recommendations
  - changes to risk assessments, control measures and safe working practices
  - any new training requirements that are identified.
23. HST will provide advice and support to help managers.

### **External investigations**

24. All employees must cooperate fully with any external investigations into accidents or incidents. This might include investigations carried out by the Health and Safety Executive, the Police, or another external organisation, such as the Fire and Rescue Service.
25. Directorates must make sure that any external investigators are provided with appropriate facilities, information and documentation they request to enable them to carry out their work.

## ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT INVESTIGATION CHECKLISTS

<b>Manager's name</b>	
<b>Contact details</b>	
<b>Date of accident / incident</b>	
<b>Time of accident / incident</b>	
<b>Brief description of accident / incident</b>	

<b>Emergency response</b>	
<b>Have you / do you need to...</b>	✓
• Call the emergency services?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Call a first aider?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Evacuate the area or take action to make it safe?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Secure the area with barriers, fencing, tape, signs, or other measures?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Call the relatives of any employees involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Let local residents know if the accident or incident could impact on them?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Report the accident to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Contact your Strategic / Service Directors, or the Chief Executive?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Telephone the Health and Safety Team?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Get someone to take notes and keep information to help with the investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Let the Council's Communications Team know, so they can deal with any media queries?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Initial investigation</b>	
<b>Have you...</b>	✓
• Recorded the details of those involved and of any witnesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Noted details the environment and conditions at the time?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Listed any substances involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Listed any plant, machinery or equipment involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Recorded exactly what was being done at the time and who was doing it?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Identified anything unusual or different about the circumstances?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Checked that those involved were aware of the rules and procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Made sure that safe working rules or procedures were being followed, and if not, why not?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Identified if shortcuts were taken and why? Were shortcuts often taken?	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Initial investigation - continued</b>	
<b>Have you...</b>	✓
• Checked whether personal protective equipment, PPE, was required, issued and used by anyone involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Checked what instruction, training or information was provided to those involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Deeper investigation checklist

<b>Where the accident / incident happened</b>	
<b>Have you checked whether...</b>	✓
• Access and egress adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The correct access and egress points being used?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The workplace was suitable for the task being undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• There was enough space to perform the task?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• People were appropriately segregated from hazards such as machinery?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Lighting, temperature and ventilation were suitable?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• There was too much noise?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The ergonomics of the workplace suited the individuals involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• General housekeeping was OK?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The weather conditions could have had an impact on the situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• There were adequate warning signs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equipment and machinery, E&amp;M</b>	
<b>Have you checked whether...</b>	✓
• E&M used was suitable for the job?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• E&M was suitable for the people using it?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• E&M had been altered from the manufacturer's specification?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• E&M was in good working order?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• E&M was being used correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A routine maintenance programme was in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• There's a fault reporting procedure for E&M in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any guards were in place and correctly fitted?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• E&M controls were easily operated and clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Substances</b>	
<b>Have you checked whether...</b>	✓
• Exposure to substances was adequately controlled?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Substances were being used correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Substances - continued</b>	
<b>Have you checked whether...</b>	✓
• Personal Protective Equipment, PPE, was required to handle substances?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• PPE was available and issued?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• PPE was adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• PPE was being used correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Training, information, supervision and instruction were adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Processes and procedures</b>	
<b>Have you checked whether...</b>	✓
• There were safe working procedures in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Procedures were up to date?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The correct procedures were followed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The procedures cover emergency procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Employees are trained in the safe working procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Management checks are made to see that procedures are correct and properly followed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The level of supervision was adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>The people involved</b>	
<b>Have you checked whether...</b>	✓
• They are suited to the job, physically and emotionally?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A health problem could have affected an individual's performance?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Human error could have contributed to the accident or incident?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any human error involved could have been caused by:	
– fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>
– a lack of motivation or boredom	<input type="checkbox"/>
– being distracted	<input type="checkbox"/>
– being preoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/>
– too much pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>
– too little time to do the job	<input type="checkbox"/>
– medication, alcohol or illegal drugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>