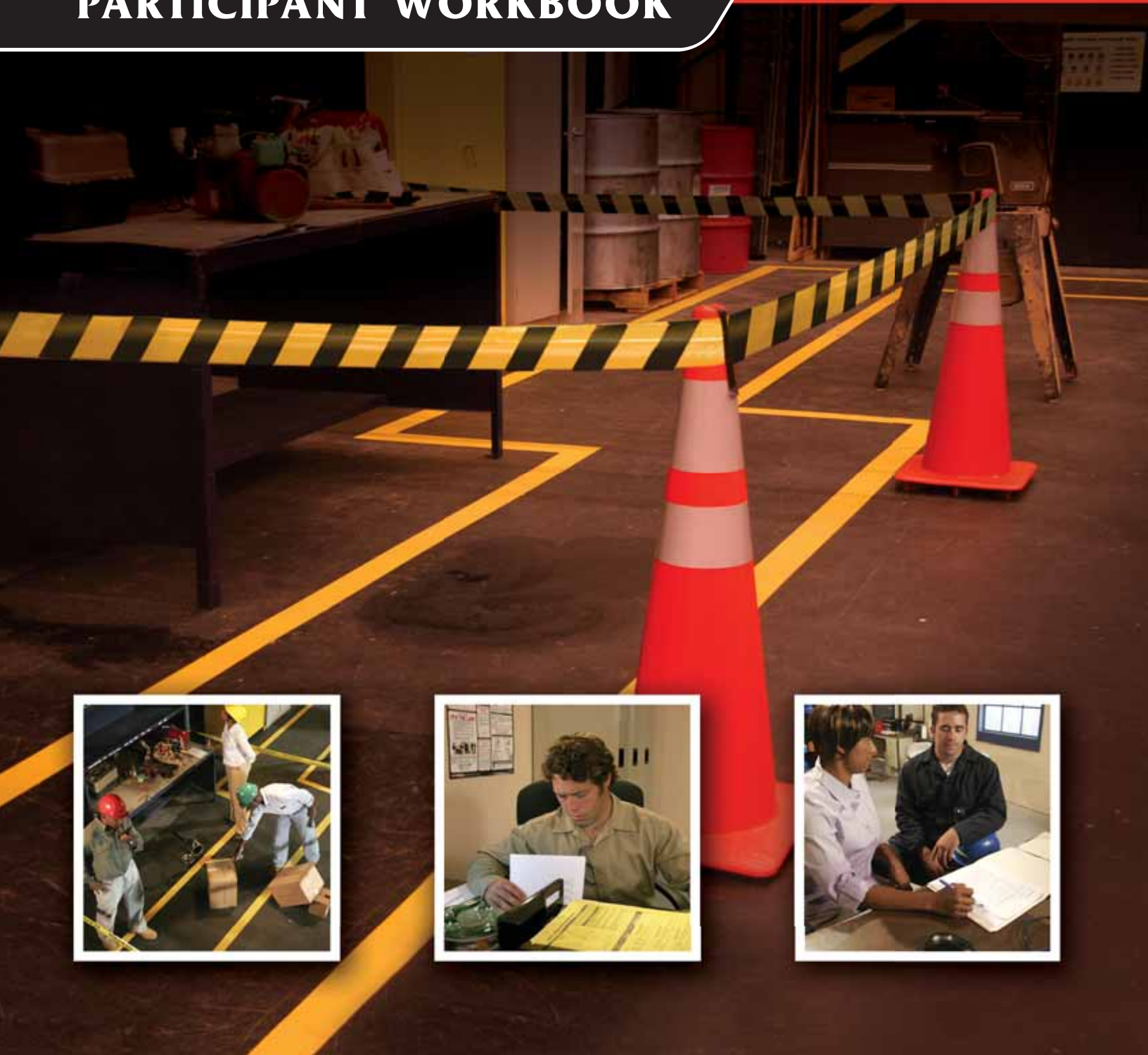


# Incident Investigation: Recommendations, Communication and Follow-Up

## PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK



# **Incident Investigation: Recommendations, Communication and Follow-Up**

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## REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MODULE

In the previous module we covered:

- *Step 4: Determine All Contributing Factors, and*
- *Step 5: Determine Systems to Be Strengthened of the 8-Step Incident Investigation process.*
- You learned the process of uncovering root causes of an incident and how to categorize your data into areas for further exploration – Physical, Human, and Operating Systems.
- You also learned to keep asking “why” until you get to the key factors and root causes of the incident.
- And finally, you learned how to take the investigation a step further to determine possible management systems that may need to be strengthened.



## INTRODUCTION

In this module we'll take you through the final three steps of the incident investigation process - **Step 6: Recommend Corrective and Preventive Actions; Step 7: Document and Communicate Findings; and Step 8: Follow Up.**

This workbook will help you:

- Apply what you learn from identifying key factors and systems to be strengthened and make the necessary changes to prevent a similar incident from occurring again.
- Learn the importance of documenting and communicating problem areas and solutions from the investigation to everyone on your team and throughout the organization.
- Understand the importance of following up to be sure changes have been implemented satisfactorily.

You've conducted the initial investigation, formed a team, determined the facts, even delved further to identify the key factors that contributed to the incident and pinpointed particular systems to strengthen within your organization. Now it's time to make recommendations for change.

### Additional Notes:

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## **STEP 6: RECOMMEND CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTIVE ACTIONS**

In this step you will learn to recommend corrective and preventive actions.

- Identify at least one recommendation for each key factor.
  - In some cases, a broad recommendation may address multiple key factors.
- Recommendations exist as corrective actions or preventive actions.
  - Corrective actions are intended to fix a hazard while preventive actions *prevent* a hazard from occurring.
- There are three levels of a corrective action.
  - First, **eliminate a hazard** to insure the incident will never happen again.
  - If this is not possible, the next best solution is to **control the hazard**.
  - For a hazard that cannot be eliminated or controlled, **make rules, write procedures, and train people** to protect themselves appropriately.
- Consider first the actions that affect the hazards most likely to recur.
- Weigh the severity of hazards, the cost of hazards, and their impact on the entire organization.
- Evaluate every suggestion for its value as a real solution to the problem.

### **Discussion Notes:**

- What can be done to make sure people protect themselves appropriately against a possible incident?

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- Give an example of how a hazard may be eliminated to prevent recurrence of an incident.

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- Discuss ways to prevent spill and fall incidents in your facility.

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**Additional Notes:**

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## STEP 7: DOCUMENT AND COMMUNICATE FINDINGS

In this step you will learn the three parts to a recommendation.

- There are three parts to a recommendation.
  - First, make sure the **description** of the recommendation is **clear**.
  - Second, name the **person** and their **position** that will be responsible for implementing the recommendation.
  - Third, identify a **completion date** – a time by which the change should be implemented.
- Clearly define the results expected from a particular recommendation and set priorities for each action, identifying which ones should be completed before operations resume.
- Ensure recommendations are not ignored, but document and track them outside of the investigation reporting.





### Discussion Notes:

- Discuss why it's important to not include any recommendations or improvement suggestions that are not associated with the incident facts or situation.

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## COMMUNICATION

The importance of communicating your recommendations cannot be emphasized enough.

- If people never see the recommendations and implement them, then your goal of preventing the incident from recurring and protecting people's lives won't be achieved.
- Communicating the information you have gathered, the lessons you have learned, and your recommended solutions will go a long way toward preventing incidents from happening again.
- When it comes to incident investigation, there are two levels of formal communication: official investigation report and general report.
  - The first level is an official incident investigation report with a limited distribution.
    - » This report identifies the details of what happened, including who was involved; the root causes, which are key factors and management system weaknesses; and recommendations for corrective action that will address the causes, including timing for completion and who is responsible for taking action.



- » This report should be reviewed with all company and contract employees who were involved in the incident.
- » This report may also be shared with others in your organization for learning purposes or with government agencies who request it.
- The second level is a widely distributed general report that summarizes the circumstances, contributing factors, and lessons learned.
  - » This document does not identify the people involved.
  - » The main purpose of this report is to increase awareness, demonstrate commitment and concern for people, and help others prevent similar incidents.

**Discussion Notes:**

- What types of information would be included in the communication report in your facility?

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## ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

- In all communication about the incident, start with the WHAT.
  - Share what happened, its effect on people working in the area, key factors, the recommended corrective action, and the lessons learned.
- Next, identify the WHO. Who will receive this information?
  - Not everyone in the organization needs to know ALL information; only those who will benefit from knowing should be included.
- Decide HOW to communicate it most effectively.
  - Choose your method of communication depending on how broad your intended audience is.
- You will quickly learn which methods of communication are most effective at your site.

### Discussion Notes:

- Describe different ways to communicate the incident with employees at your facility.

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### Additional Notes:

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## **STEP 8: FOLLOW UP**

In this final step of the incident investigation process you will learn how to follow up on your recommendations for corrective or preventive actions.

- The goal of follow-up is to prevent a recurrence of the incident.
  - Ensure the recommendations receive prompt attention by creating an action plan.
- Some recommendations may look good on paper, but are unrealistic or difficult to put into place.
  - If a recommendation will not be followed or was not effective, document why, provide an alternative and get management approval to ensure thorough attention has been given to the recommendation.
- Track the progress of your recommendations periodically.
- Prior to final closure of a recommendation, determine and verify that the action is completed and fully addressed the original intent of the recommendation.



**Discussion Notes:**

- Discuss some instances when recommendations may not be followed and why.

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- Discuss how long you should track the progress of your recommendations.

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**Additional Notes:**

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## SUMMARY

In this module you've learned the final three steps of the incident investigation process: the importance of recommending corrective and preventive actions; documenting and communicating findings; and following up to be sure your recommendations are implemented and effective. You learned how to make clear and effective recommendations and how to communicate expectations and priorities regarding recommendations. And finally, you learned how to follow up to be sure recommendations were implemented and effective and if not, what to do about it.

Following these final steps of the incident investigation process completes the cycle to help prevent similar incidents from happening again. More importantly, taking these vital steps shows employees that you follow through on what you say and that you care about them.

### Additional Notes:

[illegible]

## **REVIEW OF INCIDENT INVESTIGATION 8-STEP PROCESS**

These eight steps are the backbone of an effective incident investigation and will help make your investigation successful.

- **STEP ONE – MAKE THE INITIAL RESPONSE AND COMPLETE AN INITIAL REPORT.**
  - The goal of initial response is to secure the safety of personnel and the community.
- **STEP TWO - FORM AN INVESTIGATION TEAM.**
  - The people you involve on the team depend on the severity of the incident and areas of expertise needed for the investigation.
- **STEP THREE - DETERMINE THE FACTS.**
  - The goal is to learn as much as possible about the facts of the incident by looking at physical factors, human factors, and operating systems.
- **STEP FOUR - DETERMINE ALL CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.**
  - A contributing factor is a circumstance that contributed to or may reasonably be believed to have contributed to the incident's occurrence.
- **STEP FIVE - DETERMINE SYSTEMS TO BE STRENGTHENED.**
  - Often, there's a problem with a system that contributed to the chain of events leading to the incident.

- **STEP SIX - RECOMMEND CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTIVE ACTIONS.**

- Recommendations should address all contributing factors.

- **STEP SEVEN - DOCUMENT AND COMMUNICATE FINDINGS.**

- Draft and share a clear, concise report that communicates what happened, what has been and is being done to correct the situation and prevent it from happening again.

- **STEP EIGHT - FOLLOW UP.**

- Make sure corrective actions are completed and effective.

No matter what, people are your priority and they are the reason for incident investigations. Following these steps will help to reduce incidents and make your workplace a safer and healthier place to work, but it will demonstrate your care and concern for people's lives.

### Additional Notes:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## QUIZ

1. Recommendations exist as corrective actions or preventive actions and corrective actions are intended to eliminate a hazard.  
☐ True   ☐ False
2. A good practice in Step 6 of the investigative process is to identify one recommendation even though there may be multiple key factors.  
☐ True   ☐ False
3. For a hazard that cannot be controlled, make rules, write procedures and train people to follow them.  
☐ True   ☐ False
4. You should include in your final report any recommendation or improvement suggestions even though they are not associated with the incident.  
☐ True   ☐ False
5. Prior to final closure of a recommendation, verify that the action is completed and fully addressed the original intent of the recommendation.  
☐ True   ☐ False
6. If a recommendation will not be followed, document why, suggest an alternative, and require management approval to ensure thorough attention has been given to the recommendation.  
☐ True   ☐ False
7. Everyone in the organization needs to know all the information relating to an incident, so be sure it's communicated.  
☐ True   ☐ False

## **QUIZ (continued)**

8. In all communication about the incident, start with what happened.  
☐ True   ☐ False
9. When sharing what happened, include the effects on people working in the area, key factors, the recommended corrective actions and the lessons learned.  
☐ True   ☐ False
10. The first level of communication is a widely distributed general report.  
☐ True   ☐ False
11. The main purpose of a widely-distributed flyer as a means of communication is to identify the people involved in the incident.  
☐ True   ☐ False
12. The first part of a recommendation is to make sure the description of the recommendation is clear.  
☐ True   ☐ False
13. Clearly define what the expected results are from a particular recommendation and set priorities for each action, identifying which ones should be completed before operations resume.  
☐ True   ☐ False
14. The first level of a corrective action is to eliminate a hazard to ensure the incident will never happen again.  
☐ True   ☐ False



## **QUIZ (continued)**

15. Communicating the information you have gathered, the lessons you've learned and your recommended solutions will go a long way toward preventing incidents from happening again.
- ☐ True   ☐ False
16. The third part of a recommendation is to identify the person and their position that will be responsible for implementing the recommendation.
- ☐ True   ☐ False
17. When recommending corrective and preventive actions, weigh the severity of hazards, the cost of hazards, and their impact on the entire organization.
- ☐ True   ☐ False
18. The main reason for incident investigations is to make sure you follow federal guidelines.
- ☐ True   ☐ False
19. Evaluate every recommended suggestion for corrective and preventive actions for its value as a real solution to the problem.
- ☐ True   ☐ False
20. The method you use to communicate the recommendation depends on how broad your intended audience is.
- ☐ True   ☐ False

## **ANSWER KEY**

1. True.
2. False. Step 6 in the investigative process is to identify at least one recommendation for each key factor.
3. True.
4. False. *Do Not* include any recommendations or improvement suggestions that are not associated with the incident facts or situation.
5. True.
6. True.
7. False. Not everyone in the organization needs to know ALL information; only those who will benefit from knowing should be included.
8. True.
9. True.
10. False. The first level of communication is an official incident investigation report with a limited distribution.
11. False. The main purpose of a widely distributed general report is to increase awareness, demonstrate commitment and concern for people, and help others prevent similar incidents.

## **ANSWER KEY (continued)**

- 12. True.
- 13. True.
- 14. True.
- 15. True.
- 16. False. The third part to a recommendation is to identify a completion date; a time by which the change should be implemented.
- 17. True.
- 18. False. The main reason for incident investigations is to protect people because they are your priority.
- 19. True.
- 20. True.

## Notes

[illegible]

# Incident Investigation Training Series

- Incident Investigation: Getting Started
- Incident Investigation: Forming an Effective Team and Gathering Information
- Incident Investigation: Analyzing the Facts and Causes
- Incident Investigation: Recommendations, Communication and Follow-Up

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