

## REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING AN ACCIDENT

You should be constantly alert to potential causes of accidents—before they happen. All unsafe acts or conditions should be reported to your supervisor immediately, even if no one was hurt!

A complete accident investigation determines the following:

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- Who was involved?
- Why did it happen?
- How can it be prevented from happening again?

The observations of co-workers can be critical. As a co-worker, you can assist in an investigation by:

- Making mental or written notes about the accident before the investigation starts.
- Avoid talking to others before talking to the investigator, since this may confuse the facts.
- Answer all questions about the incident as accurately as possible.
- Don't change anything at the scene of the accident.

*First:* Make sure the worker's injuries are treated.

*Second:* Carefully investigate the events surrounding the accident. The reason for investigations is not to place blame on anyone, but to learn what happened—so similar incidents can be prevented in the future.

Should all accidents be reported and investigated? Yes, and *near misses* should be investigated too. The study of near misses can help prevent more serious incidents, where someone is actually injured. Such investigations needn't always be extensive, but records of near misses often indicate trends or hazardous conditions that can be corrected.

Top priority will be given to the most serious events. An accident that results in hospitalization or death must be immediately followed by a thorough investigation, once the injured receive care. Photographs, samples and measurements are often necessary.

Supervisors or personnel who have been trained for this generally carry out the actual investigation. Nevertheless, all employees play an important role in the accident prevention process and in preventing future mishaps. Once an employee understands why it's important for them to report all accidents and near misses,

and to cooperate fully with investigations, management can benefit from their experience and input.