PURPOSE

This policy outlines C&H EXCAVATION accident/incident investigation procedures. Immediate response, thorough investigation using Root Cause analysis methods, and follow up to ensure correction all combine to prevent re-occurrence of accidents or incidents that cost unnecessary human suffering, loss of productivity, and equipment or environmental damage.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each employee to report to his or her supervisor any incident, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem at the time. All employees will carry the accident/incident investigation forms with them at all times while on duty or in a company vehicle to begin filling out immediately upon occurrence of an accident or incident. A copy of this form can be found below. Employees will be responsible for “preserving” the scene if any incident or accident occurs until it can be thoroughly investigated. The supervisor will determine what, if any, action should be taken. The flow chart below addresses the sequence of events necessary in the reporting of any incident or accident and will be kept with each employee while on the job.

The project supervisor has the responsibility to investigate any report or complaint he or she may receive, either directly or indirectly. The investigation may be as simple as questioning the parties involved, or as complex as recreating the accident/incident scene and videotaping it, along with formal interviews and statements from all parties involved.

The President or his designee has the responsibility to assist the project supervisor in investigating the accident/incident. The President should also act as Loss Control and Injury Management. If an injury occurs requiring medical attention, the President will meet the project supervisor and injured employee at the nearest approved medical facility. After conferring with the project supervisor and obtaining all necessary information, the President or his designee will assume control of the injured employee and stay with them until they are released by the attending physician.

The EH&S department will be responsible for all regulatory reporting to ensure that all timelines are met in accordance with the standards. This includes the reporting of all “reportable incidents” to OSHA per 29 CFR 1904. OSHA requires reporting of work related incidents resulting in the death of an employee or the hospitalization of three or more employees (within 8 hours of discovery). All accidents/incidents need to be reported to the owner within 24 hours. The owner will report all necessary accidents/incidents to the owner client immediately. The EH&S department will also participate in all investigations using tap root methodology. The EH&S representatives will be trained and competent in tap root methodology. The EH&S representatives will ensure that equipment needed to assist in conducting an investigation is available such as digital cameras, tape measures, rulers, pens/pads, audio recorders, PPE, marking devices, and equipment manuals.
ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In the event there is structural damage, fire beyond the insipient stage, or hazardous materials release, the EH&S department will notify third party specialists to evaluate or contain the situation.

INVESTIGATING THE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT

Accident investigation is an important means used to prevent accidents and save the company many unnecessary expenses. Successful accident prevention requires a minimum of four fundamental activities:

1. A study of all working areas to detect and eliminate and control the physical or environmental hazards that contributes to accidents.

2. A study of all operating methods and practices.

3. Education, instruction, training, and discipline to minimize the human factors that contributes to accidents.

4. A thorough investigation of all accidents and incidents.

Accident prevention is the key element to C&H EXCAVATION safety program. Although prevention is a must, when accidents do occur, the project supervisor must be prepared to utilize the information at hand to learn from the accident to help stop similar occurrences.

All accidents must be investigated regardless of severity of injury or amount of property damage. The extent of the investigation depends on the potential outcome of the accident. An accident involving only first aid or minor property damage is not investigated to the same degree as an accident resulting in death or extensive property damage. Investigations must be fact-finding and not fault-finding, otherwise they can do more harm than good. This is not to say that responsibility should not be fixed where personal failure has caused injury. Tap Root methodology will be used in the accident investigations.

The investigation should be concerned only with facts. There are a variety of techniques available to the project supervisor. Depending on the nature of the accident, the investigation should be made by the project supervisor who is most familiar with the process involved, along with President, and the workers directly involved in the accident. The project supervisor at the scene knows more about the accident and the procedures being used at the time of the accident. By having the President present during the investigation, you are reinforcing management’s commitment to a zero injury philosophy and showing the workers that C&H EXCAVATION is serious about the safety of all workers.
Project Supervisors should make an immediate report of every injury, especially those involving medical treatment. The project supervisor should put into effect whatever measures can be adapted to prevent similar accidents in the future.

**Accident/Incident Report Writing**

The primary purpose of an accident report is to obtain valuable information. A good tool the project supervisor must use in an accident investigation is the Accident Investigation Report. *See Forms* section of the safety manual for a copy of the Accident Investigation Report. The collection of injury data must begin immediately after an accident has occurred. Preventative measures must be based on complete and unbiased knowledge of the causes of accidents. For this to happen, opinions must be left out. Remember that the primary purpose of an accident investigation is to obtain information and *not* to fix blame.

As stated earlier, each investigation should be conducted as soon as possible. A delay of only a few hours may permit important evidence to be destroyed or removed, either intentionally or unintentionally. The chief value of an investigation lies in uncovering CAUSE.

The accident investigation and report is not to place blame or “pass the buck”. No one should be assigned to the investigation team who has a reputation of unfairness. The purpose of an accident investigation is to identify facts about each injury and the accident that produced it and to record these facts.

Some definitions that the supervisor should be aware of include:

*Accident* - an unintended event that is harmful or damaging to people or equipment

*Incident* - a minor occurrence, conflict, or disturbance that does not result in injury or equipment damage

*Near miss* - narrowly avoided collision

The investigation of non-injury as well as injury accidents is essential. Below is a list of the basic types of occurrences commonly found in industry.

1. Accident
2. Incident
3. Near miss
4. Equipment damage
5. Environmental release

The first three types that are the most common investigated in industry, with the last two investigated on an as-needed basis.

A good investigation will include the entire sequence of events leading to the injury or damage. A good investigative report will record data used in finding cause.

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Key questions that must be answered are:

1. name of injured
2. social security number
3. sex of employee
4. age of employee
5. date of accident
6. home address
7. occupation of employee
8. occupation at time of injury
9. length of employment
10. years of experience in occupation at time of accident
11. nature of injury
12. witnesses, including full name, social security number, complete home address, employer name if not C&H Excavation employee
13. time of injury
14. location of accident
15. accident description, in as complete detail as possible
16. causal factors (what factors were involved and caused the accident)
17. corrective actions needed to prevent reoccurrence.

When filling out the accident report, there are several items to keep in mind.

Witness statements must be in their own writing. If the writing is hard to read, you can type a copy of it, but attach the original handwritten statement to the complete report.

Always use “employee stated ...” when writing what the employee tells you about the accident. This tells that you are only writing what the employee tells you and not your version of what happened. For example, if you write “employee slipped on oil on the ground” you are saying “I saw the employee slip on the oil”. If you write, “employee stated that he slipped on oil on the ground” then you are saying the employee told you he slipped on some oil.

Always use “alleged injury” when writing about the injury. You are not a doctor, and cannot make a diagnosis. Also, at the point in the investigation a project supervisor is writing his report, there might be some doubt that the injury actually occurred or is job-related.

Some litigation cases involving injuries can take up to four years before being settled. Many times, the reports filled out at the time of the accident are all C&H EXCAVATION has to protect themselves from unnecessary litigation, and to refresh the memories of those involved when asked to give depositions and statements. For this reason, the reports must be as detailed as possible. Information at the time of the accident that seems irreverent or unimportant can end up saving C&H EXCAVATION tremendous litigation costs in the future. Remember, it is better to have information that is not needed than to need information that you don’t have.

As a minimum, the data collected should identify the why? of an accident, as well as the who?, what?, when?, and where?. Data must show the cause, as well as indirect causes, and provide information on costs of the accident.
Project Supervisors should never delay filling out reports because memories get fuzzy, and workers will talk to each other and stories get altered. When an accident occurs, it is up to the project supervisor to (1) take care of the injured employee, (2) secure the accident site, (3) gather information on the accident from as many sources as possible.

**Casual Factors and Corrective Actions**

In any accident, there are many factors at work that permit the occurrence of the sequence of events leading to the injury. The idea behind the corrective action procedure is to identify all the factors for which a corrective action is possible and then select the ones deemed to be most effective and beneficial. Experience has proved that the most effective way to reduce accidents is to focus on one phase of the accident problem at a time.

**Managing Injuries**

The management of injuries after an accident across is just as important as accident prevention. In the event an accident occurs and after all the appropriate paper work is done, the project supervisor in charge of the employee has specific duties to fulfill. It is important to realize the quicker C&H EXCAVATION becomes involved in an injury, the easier it is to manage. For this reason, project supervisors must continually stress to the employees the importance of reporting accidents as soon as they occur.

**Selection of A Physician**

Choosing the right doctor is an important factor to consider. First and foremost, choose a doctor familiar with industrial accidents. The doctor you choose must understand the circumstances of the accident and must be willing to work with C&H EXCAVATION with the goal of getting the injured employee back to work as soon as possible. Many times a doctor’s actions will determine whether or not an accident is recordable or non-recordable. The doctor’s wording on a diagnosis is critical in determining an accident’s record ability. The method of treatment, use of prescription drugs, and return visits, are all important factors to consider when selecting a doctor to handle the care of an injured employee.

**Accompanying the Employee To The Doctor**

After selecting an industrial physician, the President must accompany the employee to the doctor’s office or select a person competent to handle this critical step in injury management. The President must explain the situation in detail to the doctor and not allow the employee to exaggerate the details of the incident. Key phrases such as “restricted duty”, “restriction of work or motion”, or “light duty” may turn a first-aid case into a recordable injury. The President must explain to the treating physician the duties that the injured employee has so the doctor will know what the employee can or cannot do after treatment.

Being present during an office examination with the injured employee cannot be emphasized enough. Too often injuries become recordable because the employee gives the doctor the idea that he is seriously hurt, when in reality he has only sustained minor injuries.
Accident/Incident Investigation Policy

**Incident Takes Place:**
Injury, Spill, Vehicle Accident

**Flowchart:**

- **NO**
  - Notify Immediate Supervisor
  - Supervisor will Notify Operator Rep.

- **YES**
  - Enact Emergency Response (911)
  - Owner or Supervisor will Notify EHS Tara Steinke 970-534-0145
  - Supervisor will Notify Operator Rep.