

Facilities Management from A to Z



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Accidents at work have a major impact on the lives of people, the productivity of business and of the economy. According to Government Statistics 180 workers were killed at work in 2008/2009, 131 895 injuries to employees were reported under the Reporting of Injury Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and 4.7 million working days were lost due to workplace injury.

The Facility Manager has important roles to play in both accident prevention through the delivery of a safe workplace and in the investigation of accidents and incidents after they have occurred. Determining the cause of workplace accidents is extremely important. Even minor accidents should be reported and properly investigated so that causes can be identified and control measures established to prevent them from happening again.

There are five steps to the accident investigation process. These are: Reporting, Investigation, Analysis, Identifying Control Measures and Action Planning.

After an accident occurs, it is important that it is reported properly. In most cases that is a process internal to the organisation. However there are certain types of accident that need to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), or the local authority.

The next step is to gather information about the accident and about the events that led up to it. The investigator will need to interview people who were injured or involved in the incident and with those who supervise the area where the incident occurred.

It is essential for an FM investigating an accident to fully understand the sequence of events leading up to a workplace accident. Most incidents arise, not because of the immediate thing that went wrong, but because of some incident or decision from much earlier.

Once the information has been gathered, it needs to be thoroughly analysed to develop an understanding of the immediate cause of the incident and of the underlying reasons for the accident.

After the accident has been analysed and the root causes identified, the responsible manager can identify control measures to prevent reoccurrence. These might include such things as the issue of personal protective equipment, redesign of workplace layout, revised operating procedures, better tools, new training activities, better signage, improved maintenance or more frequent safety inspections.

The final stage of an accident investigation is to ensure that an action plan is in place to implement the control measures that have been identified and to make sure that the action plan is properly carried out and communicated.

By following the five steps of an accident investigation, the facility manager can greatly improve workplace safety and reduce the huge impact that accidents have on individuals and the organisation. No accident is a good thing but at least if an injury does occur, a successful investigation can help to increase safety standards in the workplace.

The HSE have published a useful workbook for the investigation of accidents and incidents ISBN 9780717628278 which can be downloaded for free from HSE Books at www.hse.gov.uk/PUBNS/books/hsg245.htm