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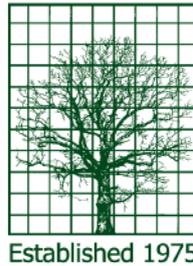
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PROCESSING WORKPLACE INCIDENTS

By Diane Shepler; Integrity Services & Solutions



In the last article, we reviewed Workers' Compensation file basics. In this article, we are looking at processing workplace incidents. Workplace incidents include workplace accidents and "close-calls."

There were approximately 2.9 million non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses reported by private industry employers in 2015, which occurred at a rate of 3.0 cases per 100 equivalent full-time workers, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reports that more than a dozen workers died every day in American workplaces in 2013. Understanding the cause of these incidents can aid employers in the prevention of future events, saving lives, reducing costs and improving morale.

All workplace incidents should follow a pre-determined process. The first step in determining a company's process is to choose an appropriate individual to oversee the process. This person is responsible for ensuring that all other persons involved in the process complete their respective duties. In larger companies, the process could involve several individuals, while in a smaller business the process could consist of one individual who is responsible for the entire process. All people chosen to be part of the process must understand the

confidential nature of the information they will have access to. Details are not to be shared with anyone other than those required to know for the sake of processing the incident.

The next step is to develop the incident investigation process. OSHA recommends a four-step approach. 1 - Preserve and document the scene. 2 - Collect information. 3 - Determine Root Causes. 4 - Implement Corrective Actions. Today we will look at step 1 - Preserve and document the scene. It is important to inspect the accident site before any changes. The investigator should use cones, tape or other marking tools to protect the site from being altered. Video recording, photographs or sketches of the incident site can be taken to document the scene. Pertinent information must be gathered such as the employee's name, injury description and the date and location of the incident. An investigation form should be developed and used for each incident to ensure consistency in processing workplace incidents.

In the next article, we will look at another step of the process.

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