

STANDARD FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

1.0 PURPOSE

This standard establishes and makes uniform the procedure to be followed during the investigation of accidents and incidents in the Panama Canal Authority (ACP), and has the objective of establishing the methodology and steps to be followed for the management and control of accidents and incidents, whether or not they result in personal injury or property damages.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Although the investigation of accidents is one of the most utilized tools, ACP does not have a standard to regulate such investigations.

3.0 SCOPE

This standard is of mandatory compliance by all employees, and is applicable to all ACP collaborators and contractors.

4.0 LEGAL FOUNDATION

This Standard is established pursuant to Agreement No. 12 of the Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Authority (ACP), Regulation on Safety and Occupational Health, Chapter 1, Article 3.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1 Work Accident: Unwanted, unintentional, and unexpected work-related events that result in losses due to personal injuries, damage to property, equipment, materials, and to the environment. Require formal investigation.

5.2 Corrective Actions: Set of measures to control or correct the basic causes of the accidents, by way of compensating the unwanted effects; they hold different degrees of effectiveness, cost, and collateral effects.

5.3 Immediate Causes or Symptoms (substandard conditions and practices): Are those circumstances immediately preceding the event, contact – these can normally be seen or felt.

5.4 Incident: Is understood to mean those events that have not caused injury, damage to property, equipment, and materials, and/or the environment, but that under different circumstances could have caused injury or loss.

5.5 Basic Causes (PERSONAL AND WORK FACTORS, Form 5029): Those designated as personal factors explain why workers do not act as they should, and those designated as work-related factors explain why deficient conditions exist or are created. They are the reasons why the deficient acts or conditions occurred (illnesses or the real causes behind the symptoms.)

5.6 Accident Investigation: Is a preventive technique directed towards detecting and controlling the causes that originated the accident/incident, for the purpose of avoiding the recurrence of the same accident/incident or the occurrence of a similar one. Consists of objectively evaluating all the related facts, opinions, statements or information, and defining an action plan to solve the problem that originated the accident/incident.

5.7 Source of Accident: Is the incorrect or deficient work that the person was performing when the event occurred, involving other persons, equipment, materials and the environment.

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5.8 Accident Agent: Is the physical environmental element that has direct participation in the generation of an accident. We can normally classify them as, for example: Materials, production means, buildings, tools, etc.

5.9 Type of Accident: Is the manner in which contact is produced between the person and objects in the environment.

5.10 Root Causes: The lack of control factors and administrative system are the real causes behind the symptoms, and the principal reasons for which the unsafe/unhealthy practices or conditions were produced. Their identification contributes to a better administrative control of risks and dangers. Examples of these are: Lack of knowledge, lack of skill, deficient standards, etc.

6.0 GENERAL

The investigation of accidents and incidents is a fundamental tool in the control of work-related conditions, and allows that valuable information be obtained to avoid subsequent accidents and incidents. As soon as an accident occurs it shall be reported (**see APPENDIX A**). The final objective of all accident investigations is to establish the root cause of such accident and implement measures to eliminate the causes that fostered or facilitated the accident. The investigation shall be carried out as soon as possible to enable the collection of first-hand information.

6.1 When investigating an accident, the deficient acts and/or conditions that allowed the occurrence of the accident must be established with the greatest possible precision.

6.1.1 Concrete and objective facts shall be collected, and assumptions or interpretations shall never be made.

6.1.2 The person injured shall be interviewed as soon as possible, and whenever possible. Interviews with eyewitnesses shall be performed individually, to avoid the influence of different interviewees. Avoid bias questions or premature judgments.

6.1.3 All supporting information, photographs, sketches, and interviews shall be compiled as soon as possible.

6.2 Those responsible for the investigation of accidents shall achieve the following objectives:

6.2.1 Direct: Data collection; know the facts, reconstruct the situation; know the causes that originated it.

6.2.1.1 Observe the Accident Characteristics: Time, conditions of the site, persons, type, symptom, and agent.

6.2.1.2 Source of the Accident: In the performance of which task did the accident / accident reconstruction occur:

6.2.1.2.1 Description of the work (What was being done?)

6.2.1.2.2 How should it be done?

6.2.1.2.3 Who does it?

6.2.1.2.4 ¿When is it done?

6.2.1.2.5 Description of the accident.

6.2.1.2.6 Possible causes of the accident occurrence.

6.2.1.2.7 Causes shall be agents, existing facts or proven circumstances of the accident, never assumptions.

6.2.2 Preventive:

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6.2.2.1 Processing and integration of data, study/analysis of immediate and basic causes, selection of principal causes, organization of the results and recommendations, according to their importance.

6.2.2.2 Recommendations to eliminate root cause.

6.2.2.2.1 Review or establish working procedures.

6.2.2.2.2 Development and training of personnel.

6.2.2.2.3 Effective communication.

6.2.2.2.4 Remedial.

6.2.2.2.4.1 It is the most important aspect of an investigation (examples: temporary measures, remedial plan, remedial dates, responsible persons, etc.).

6.2.2.2.4.2 Establish or modify working procedures (develop or revise the safe work analysis (SWA) in a manner that contemplates the dangers / administrative controls, engineering and/or others).

6.2.2.2.5 Develop or review new standards.

6.2.3 Accident Investigation Committee. If necessary, on a case-by-case evaluation and depending on the seriousness of the incident, the person(s) responsible for compiling, safekeeping, and analyzing the findings-evidence necessary to investigate an accident and prepare the recommendations to prevent its recurrence shall be designated as soon as possible.

6.3 DEVELOPMENT

6.3.1 All those responsible for carrying out accident investigations shall receive formal developmental training on accident investigation techniques, and on the procedures detailed in this standard.

6.3.2 Personnel responsible for performing accident investigations shall receive the course on Accident Investigation conducted by the Industrial and Safety Training Unit (RHSI).

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Section or Division Manager

7.1.1 Ensure prompt accident investigations.

7.1.2 Establish an accident investigation committee, if warranted.

7.1.3 Provide support to those responsible for accident investigations by facilitating the means of transportation, equipment, tools, and supplies required for the investigation.

7.1.4 Shall ensure that preventive or remedial actions are implemented in an effective manner to avoid reoccurrence.

7.2 The Safety Specialist (of the Safety and Industrial Hygiene Unit – RSHS)

7.2.1 The function of the Safety Specialist shall be to assist the supervisor in the investigation, and facilitate the means for a good outcome.

7.2.2 Shall participate in the investigations, if requested.

7.2.3 Participate in the accident investigation committee, if established, and offer the necessary supporting information for a satisfactory conclusion.

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7.2.4 Review Form 5029, Supervisor's Accident Report (**see Annex 2**), to confirm that the root cause was determined, and make his/her comments.

7.3 The Supervisor

7.3.1 Once the injured person has been rescued or treated, he/she shall notify the Specialist, his/her immediate supervisor, or the inspector representing the Contracting Official as soon as possible.

7.3.2 Promptly investigate the losses, accidents, minor injuries, or incidents that arise in their working areas.

7.3.3 For each investigation performed, a complete and precise report, without deviations and based on undistorted facts, shall be made to Management and the Occupational Safety and Health Specialist in less than 48 hours.

7.3.4 Contractor shall provide training for their own employees.

8.0 INQUIRIES

Any information or clarification of the content or application of this Standard must be requested in writing to the Safety and Industrial Hygiene Unit (RHSH).

9.0 EXCEPTIONS

There are no exceptions to compliance with this standard.

10.0 TERM

This Standard shall remain in force until amended or revised.

11.0 REFERENCES

ACP Safety and Occupational Health Manual, Revised January 2000, Section 2.