

# DOAS Loss Control Bulletin

April 2011

## Topic of the Month... Accident Investigation

### Good accident/incident investigation must be an essential part of any safety program.

The unexpected actions of people, equipment, supplies, or surroundings cause most accidents. Accident investigations determine how and why these unexpected actions occur. They should be conducted with accident prevention in mind, not to place blame. A detailed investigation of most accidents will normally reveal two causes of accidents: surface causes and root causes.

- **Surface causes** are the hazardous conditions or unsafe work practices that directly or indirectly contributed to the accident.
- **Root causes** are the system weaknesses or failures (policies/procedures/practices) that allow the existence of hazardous conditions and unsafe work practices.

If an employee slips and falls due to oil on the floor, the oil is the surface cause. The root cause may be a leaky forklift hydraulic line from lack of maintenance. The key word here is "Details." A good investigator will gather as many details as possible, as soon as safely possible. You want to record your details before something changes or gets moved.



### **Priorities for incident investigation:**

- The first concern is the **injured party**. If they need extrication from a piece of equipment, do not be concerned about saving "evidence". Get the person out and then to treatment. Report the injury according to your agency's procedures.
- Second, **secure** the accident scene. The area should remain intact until investigation is complete. Keep other employees and/or spectators away from the area, especially if there is blood or other bodily fluids.
- Identify any **witnesses**. Even if what they saw was minimal, take their statement. Many witnesses think they didn't see much, but when all statements are assembled the puzzle comes together. Obtain statements immediately. Don't wait till the end of the shift! Witnesses should be kept separated until they write their statement. If witnesses "compare" notes, their observations can be affected, like things they didn't really see. Ask them to give as much detail as possible. Here are some examples of witness statements:

1. "Jimmy was standing on the catwalk and he slipped and fell and broke his leg."
2. "Jimmy was standing on the catwalk when the main hydraulic line broke and sprayed oil all over his legs and the catwalk. When he tried to jump out of the way, because his shoes were wet with oil, it caused him to slip and fall and break his leg."
3. "Jimmy was standing on the catwalk and was throwing wet paper towels at his assistant Pete. When Pete threw one back at him, Jimmy stepped over the catwalk rail to get out of the way and stepped on a hydraulic line. When the hydraulic line broke, it caused Jimmy to fall and break his leg."



You can see there are three clear differences. #1 Kind of goes nowhere, it is very basic. #2 is able to show no fault of the employee and #3 shows the employee was clearly at fault due to his horseplay. It is these kinds of details that can have a big impact on an investigation.

- **Document.** If you can get access to a camera, now is a good time to take pictures. The first two should both be at different angles and from a distance of about 20 to 30 feet away and then come in for detailed photos. Better to have too many than not enough. Determine the chain of events that lead to the incident. Determine the "Root Cause". Complete the report write up.

**THE PAYOFF** - developing "Corrective Actions" that will prevent future similar incidents. Communicate your findings to your entire organization. In this day and age there is simply no reason to repeat the same mistakes.



**Thanks for your time. Let's work together to make Georgia a safer place to work.**

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## Fleet Management Page

### April 2011



#### UPCOMING FLEET MEETINGS

##### Athens, Atlanta, Macon

<b>Friday, April 22, 2011</b>		
University of Georgia, Zell B. Miller Learning Center, 48 Baxter Street, Athens 30605		
TIME	MAIN ROOM	LAB—HANDS ON TRAINING
8:15 – 8:30	Welcome	
8:30 – 9:00	Report My Driving	VITAL Insights Training
9:00 – 9:45	VITAL Insights	WEX Fuel Card
9:45 – 10:00	Break	
10:00 – 10:45	WEX Fuel Card	VITAL Insights Training
10:45 – 11:45	Open Discussion	
11:45 – 12:30	Enterprise	Report My Driving

Parking & Directions – <http://mic.uga.edu/directions/index.html>

<b>Tuesday, April 26, 2011</b>		
Sloppy Floyd Building, 200 Piedmont Avenue SE West Tower Rm 1816, Atlanta 30334		
TIME	MAIN ROOM	LAB—HANDS ON TRAINING
8:15 – 8:30	Welcome	
8:30 – 9:00	Report My Driving	VITAL Insights Training
9:00 – 9:45	VITAL Insights	WEX Fuel Card
9:45 – 10:00	Break	
10:00 – 10:45	WEX Fuel Card	VITAL Insights Training
10:45 – 11:45	Open Discussion	
11:45 – 12:30	Enterprise	Report My Driving

Parking & Directions – <http://doas.ga.gov/AboutUs/Pages/AboutContact.aspx>

<b>Tuesday, May 24, 2011</b>		
Central Georgia Technical College Auditorium, 3300 Macon Tech Dr, Macon 31206		
TIME	MAIN ROOM	LAB—HANDS ON TRAINING
9:15 – 9:30	Welcome	
9:30 – 10:00	Report My Driving	VITAL Insights Training
10:00 – 10:45	VITAL Insights	WEX Fuel Card
10:45 – 11:00	Break	
11:00 – 11:45	WEX Fuel Card	VITAL Insights Training
11:45 – 12:45	Open Discussion	
12:45 – 1:30	Enterprise	Report My Driving

Parking & Directions – [http://www.centraleatech.edu/general/locations/macon/macon\\_map.html](http://www.centraleatech.edu/general/locations/macon/macon_map.html)