

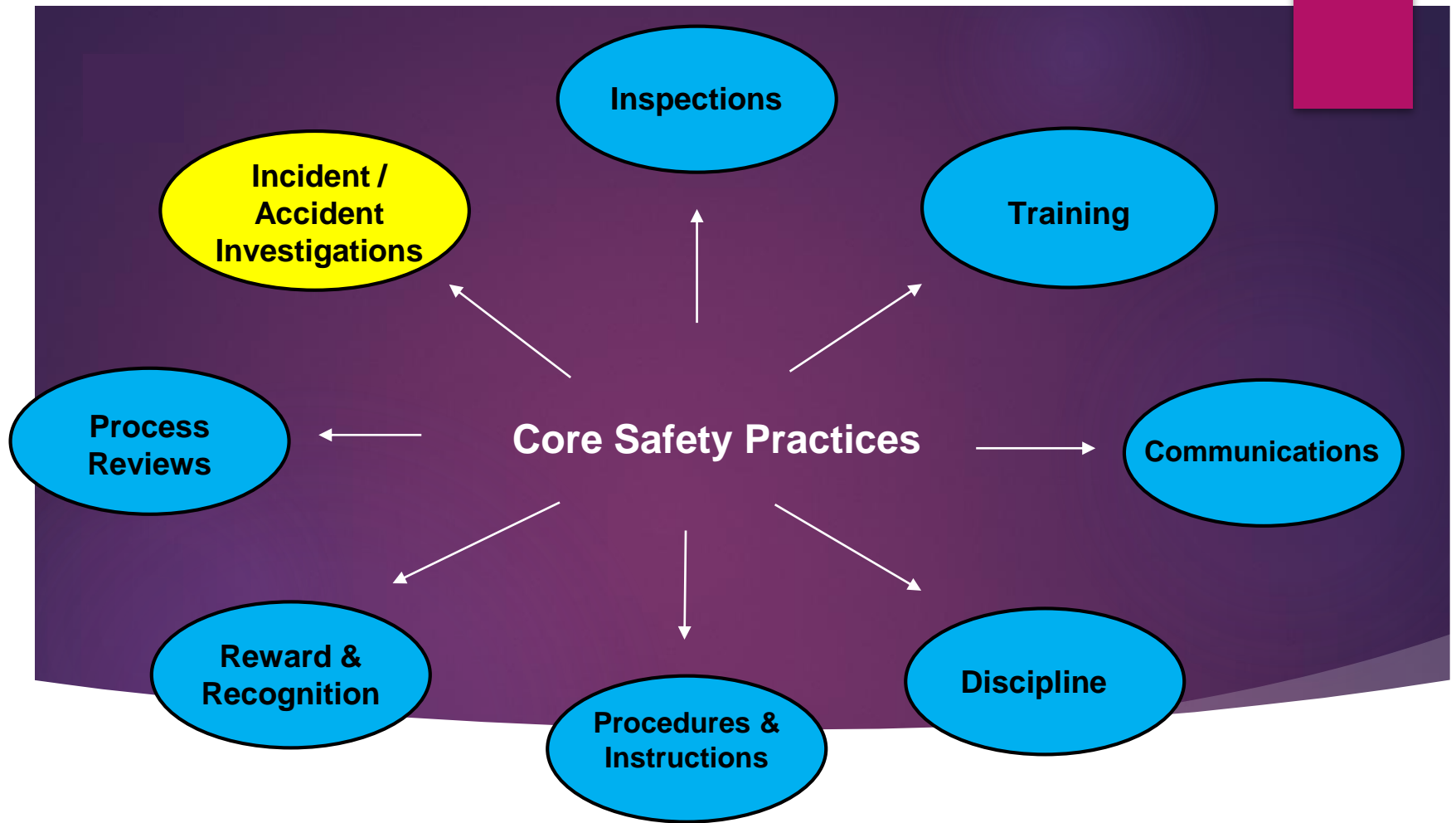
Accident/Incident Investigation, Reporting and Follow-up



**Middleton–Cross Plains
Area School District**
inclusive. innovative. inspiring.



Jeanne T. Butzek, CSRMM
Assistant District Safety Coordinator
jbutzek@mcpasd.k12.wi.us



“Continuous Improvement Framework”

What Is An "Incident"?

An **incident** is an unplanned and unwanted event which disrupts normal activities and has the potential of resulting in injury, harm, or damage to persons or property (e.g. fall on steps with no injury).

An incident disrupts the work process, does not result in injury or damage, but should be looked as a "wake up call". It can be thought of as the first of a series of events which could lead to a situation in which may become a loss.

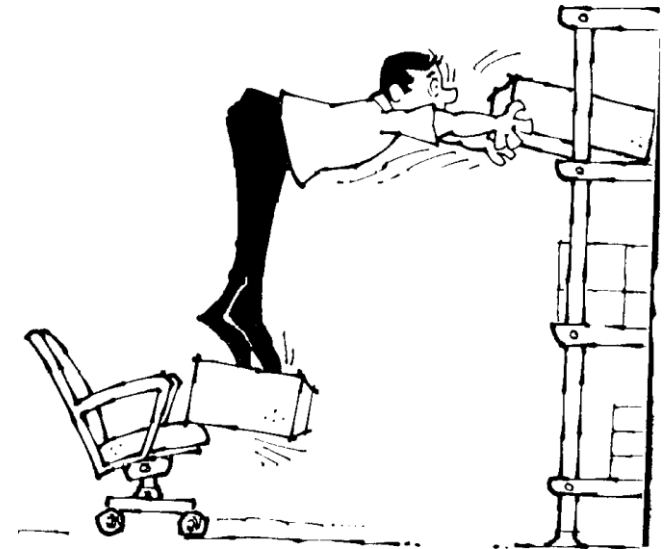
What is An "Accident"?

By definition: "an unforeseen event", ".chance..", "unexpected

An **accident** is an unplanned and unwanted event which disrupts normal activities and results in an injury, harm, or damage to persons or property (e.g. fall on steps resulting in a broken ankle).

What Is An "Accident"?

- Accidents are predictable events - they are the logical outcome of hazards.
- Accidents are preventable and avoidable - hazards do not have to exist. They are often caused by things people do -- or fail to do.
- *Accidents don't have to happen!*



Let's Look at "Incident" vs. "Accident"

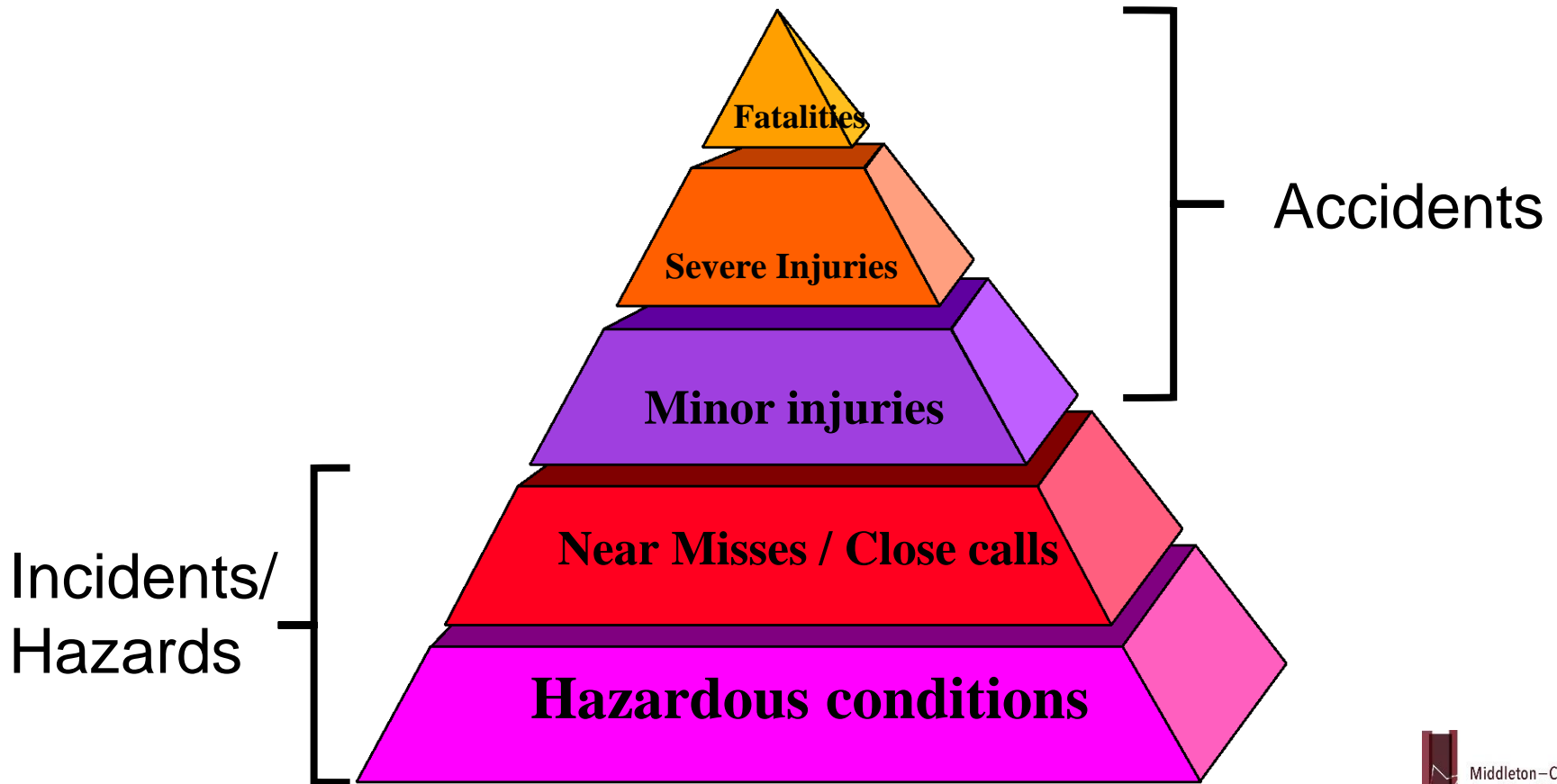
An **Incident** is an accident without loss (injury or damage)

An **Accident** is an incident with loss (injury or damage)



A Simplified Way to Look at

“Incident” vs. “Accident”



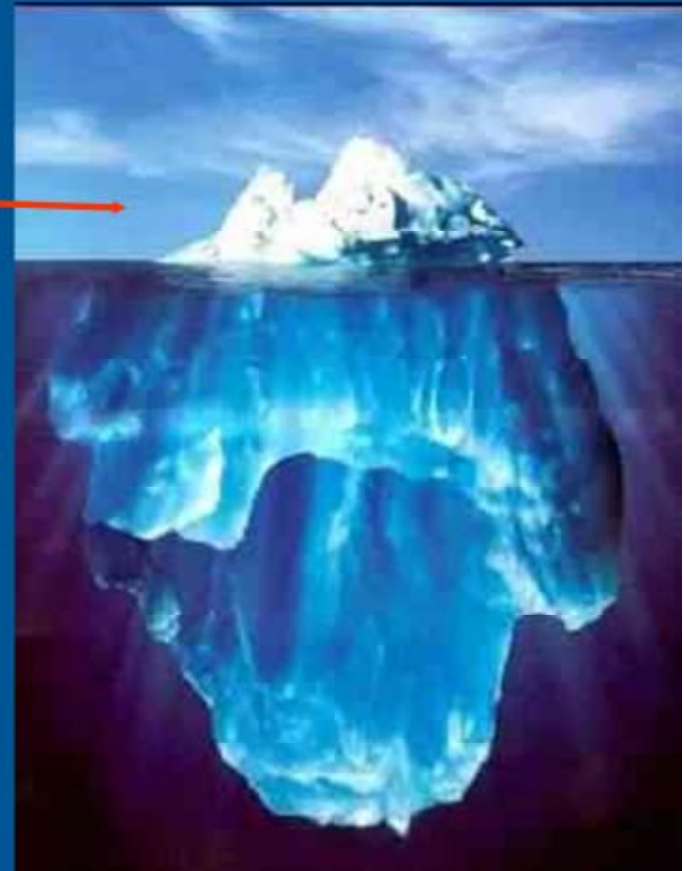
Look at it as the “Tip of the Iceberg”

Accidents

Accidents or injuries represent only a fraction of the errors that exist.

Incidents

Investigate incidents since they are potential “accidents in progress”.



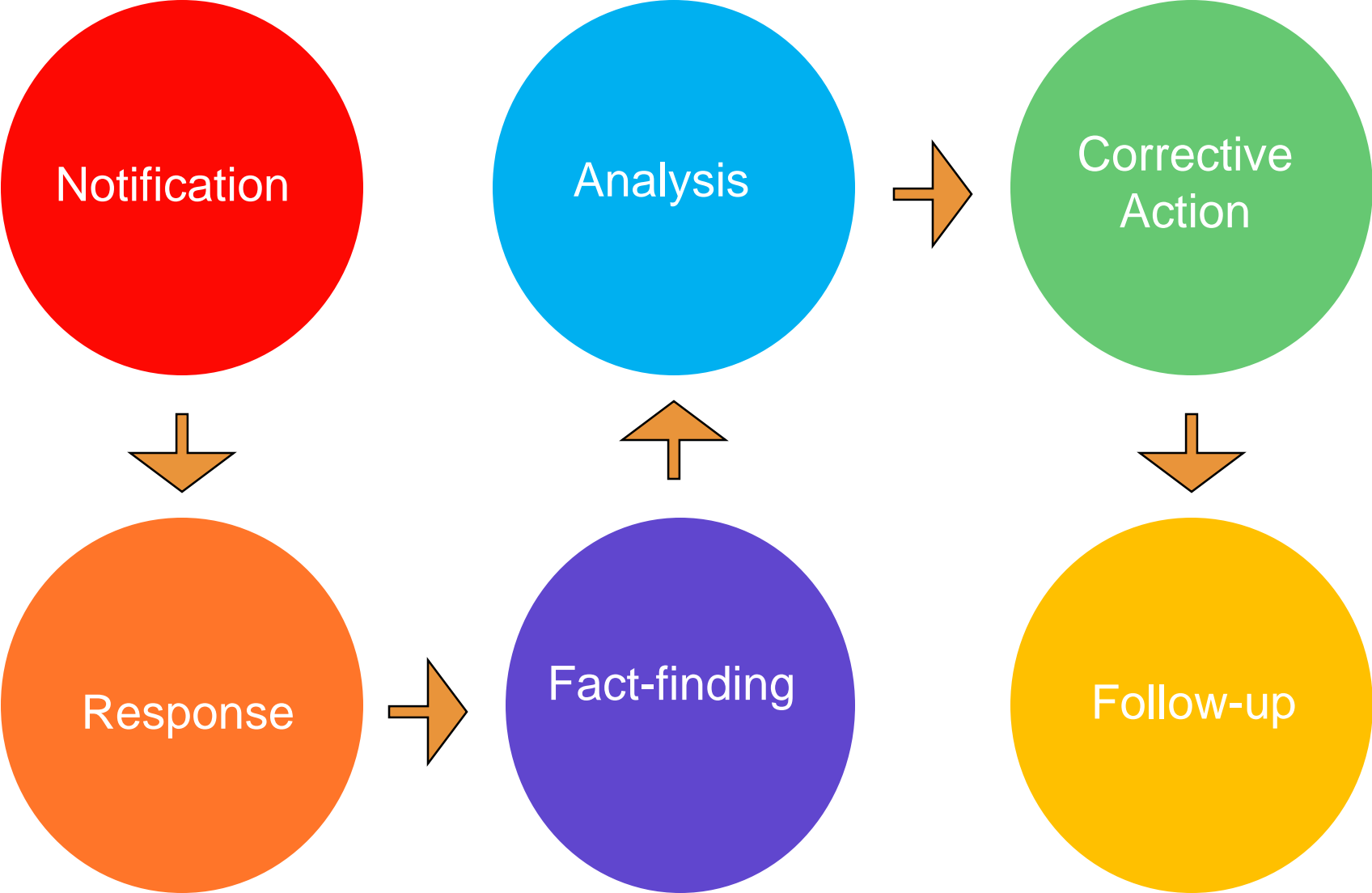
Benefits of Incident/Accident Investigation

- ▶ Prevent future accidents/incidents by identifying and eliminating hazards
- ▶ Expose deficiencies in process and/or equipment
- ▶ Maintain worker morale
- ▶ Greater safety awareness - provides the cornerstone for a effective workplace safety / injury prevention program
- ▶ Facts gathered in the event of litigation
- ▶ Reduce injury and worker compensation costs

Accident Investigation

- The goals of accident investigation are:
 - Determine/find the root cause(s)
 - Take the appropriate corrective action(s)
 - Prevent a similar accident/incident from happening again
- Accident investigation should NOT assign blame - it should identify breakdowns in the safety process

Steps in the Accident Investigation Process



Notification

Your plan, policy, procedure or process should, at a minimum, address:

- What types of incidents/accidents required to be reported and investigated
 - All injuries or accidents with the potential for injury
 - All incidents/accidents resulting in property damage
 - All “near misses” where there was potential for serious injury
- Who, internally and externally, should be notified when an incident/accident occurs
- How the incident/accident should be reported

Notification

- Is there an established safety-oriented culture within the school district?
- Are effective processes in place to encourage and facilitate timely reporting of incidents/ accidents to the appropriate district staff?
- Have barriers to report incidents/accidents been identified and removed?
 - Employee/supervisor accident reporting training
 - Electronic or on-line accident reporting functionality

Response

- Obtain/ensure medical treatment
- Eliminate dangerous/obvious hazard
 - Don't wait for investigation process
- Secure the accident scene
 - Control unsafe conditions
 - Preserve material (critical) evidence
 - Prepare for possible third party involvement
- Provide appropriate notifications regarding the accident/injury
- Identify who should be involved in the accident investigation process

Fact-finding

- Collect / gather accident-related information
- Examine / document the accident scene
 - Note location of person(s) at the time of the accident
 - Note location of objects
 - Note conditions (including weather if applicable)
 - Take photographs or video (as warranted)
- Develop a sequence of events
 - Detailed step by step description of the accident
 - Do not just describe the accident itself, include a description of the events that led up to the accident

Fact-finding

- Interview the injured employee(s) as soon as possible
- Identify and interview accident witnesses
- Utilize practical, simple approaches
 - Who, What, Where, When, How, WHY
- Don't jump to conclusions and recommendations too quickly
- Remember that accidents rarely result from a single cause - they usually result from network of multiple causes



Interviewing

When is it best to interview? Why?

Who should we interview? Why?

Where should we conduct the interview?

Analysis

Determining and understanding the cause(s) of the accident

- Start by analyzing the events to discover the **surface cause(s)** for the accident
 - Surface causes are usually obvious/evident and not overly difficult to determine
- Then, by working to understand the “WHY” behind the system factors, the related **root cause(s)** are uncovered
- Focus on the underlying causes (the **root causes**), not symptoms (the **surface causes**)

Analysis

The **WHAT** and **WHY** of an investigation:

WHAT happened?

- Identifying/determining the surface cause(s)
 - What were the conditions?
 - What was the employee doing?

WHY did it happen?

- Identifying/determining the root cause(s)

Analysis

The **surface causes** of accidents are those hazardous conditions and individual unsafe employee/manager acts or behaviors that have directly caused or contributed in some way to the accident.

Analysis

Hazardous conditions may exist in any of the following categories:

- ▶ Materials
- ▶ Machinery
- ▶ Equipment
- ▶ Tools
- ▶ Chemicals
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Workstations
- ▶ Facilities
- ▶ People
- ▶ Workload

Analysis

Most hazardous conditions are the result of an unsafe behavior(s). Examples of unsafe employee/ manager behaviors may include:

- ▶ Failing to comply with rules
- ▶ Using unsafe methods
- ▶ Taking shortcuts
- ▶ Horseplay
- ▶ Failing to report injuries
- ▶ Failing to report hazards
- ▶ Allowing unsafe behaviors
- ▶ Failing to train or inadequate training
- ▶ Failing to supervise
- ▶ Failing to correct
- ▶ Excessive workload

Analysis

The **root causes** for accidents are the underlying system weaknesses that have somehow contributed to the existence of hazardous conditions and unsafe behaviors that represent surface causes of accidents.

A **root cause** is the cause that, if corrected, should prevent recurrence of this and similar occurrences.

Analysis

There are two categories of systematic root causes:

Design Weaknesses

- ▶ Missing or inadequate safety policies/ procedures
- ▶ Missing or inadequate training program
- ▶ Poorly written plans
- ▶ Inadequate process
- ▶ Lack of procedures

Implementation Weaknesses

- ▶ Safety policies/rules are not being enforced
- ▶ Safety training is not being conducted
- ▶ Lack of adequate or appropriate supervision
- ▶ Incident/accident analysis is inconsistent

Corrective Action

Developing corrective or preventative actions is the most important step in the accident/incident investigation process.

If root causes are not corrected, it is only a matter of time before a similar accident occurs.

Corrective Action

- Identify and address multiple root causes
 - Not just the apparent, immediate causes
- Develop system controls to address or solve the causes
 - If this is corrected, will the likelihood of recurrence be eliminated?
 - Are the controls systematic and sustainable?
- Multiple root causes need multiple controls
 - Avoid focus on a single solution
- Identify those persons who are responsible for corrective/preventative actions

Follow-up

- Establish a timeline and process to follow-up on corrective actions
 - Who is responsible for implementing?
 - Who is responsible for following-up on that person?
- Evaluate to find out or determine if the corrective actions are effective in preventing similar accidents from occurring
- Modify or revise corrective actions as needed
- Share / communicate the results

Tips on Investigating Accidents and Injuries

When investigating we want to **GAIN** knowledge!

1) **Go** to and secure the accident scene

▶ Accident / investigation report/ form (FILL OUT COMPLETELY!)

2) **Ask**

▶ Open ended questions; Tell me how...

▶ For a demonstration; Show me how...

▶ For employee input; What do you think can be done?

3) **Interview** accident victims / witnesses separately

4) **Never** place blame; look for **FACTS ONLY!**

Accident Investigation Example

- Interview the injured employee
- Interview witnesses
- Interview the supervisor
- Inspect the accident site/scene/equipment
- Determine:
 - **Surface causes** - Unsafe acts and/or unsafe conditions / hazards
 - **Root causes** - Policies/procedures, decisions, personal factors, environmental factors

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Thank you for helping to keep our students
and staff safe in our schools!!!!



Jeanne T. Butzek, CSRM
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