

Employee injuries are costly to a business. Injuries affect productivity, employee morale, and business expenses. An increase in the frequency of employee injuries can raise your Workers' Compensation experience modification factor, resulting in increased Workers' Compensation insurance premiums. In addition, a high experience modification factor may prevent your company from bidding on construction projects or industrial contracts.

Companies with an effective employee injury accident investigation program know implementing corrective action is key to preventing individual accident recurrence. Accident analysis identifies your company's accident trends. Addressing accident trends is a systematic approach to preventing employee injuries.

An effective method of reducing accidents is to focus on a common aspect of accidents. These commonalities are the accident trends. It is important to have good accident reporting as part of the employee injury accident investigation program. Accident reporting provides the information needed to conduct accident analysis.

To start your accident analysis, collect the supervisor accident investigation reports for a particular time period, such as one calendar year. Record the number of accidents that have occurred in that time period. Then, select particular categories of information from these reports. Categories could include:

- Job being performed by the employee
- Department in which the injury occurred
- Shift or time of day the injury occurred
- Day of the week the injury occurred
- Body part injured
- Accident type (e.g., strain, sprain, laceration, burn, contusion)
- Accident cause (e.g., overexertion, struck by, struck against, caught in, caught between, falls)
- Machinery or equipment involved
- Experience on the job
- Length of employment
- Worker age

Additional categories may be useful as part of the accident trend analysis. For instance, the name of the injured worker may reveal employees who are involved in multiple accidents. This analysis may help identify employees who have more hazardous job tasks or people who do not diligently follow safety procedures.

Once you have categories selected, tally the number of incidents in each category and calculate each category's percentage of overall accidents. List the categories from highest to lowest percentage. Focus on the top few categories to identify further commonalities. For example, you could identify back injuries as a high percentage of body part injured, strains as a high percentage of accident type, and lifting (overexertion) as a high percentage accident cause. Did many of the back strains from lifting come from one or two departments or job occupations? Did these accidents come from workers with less job experience? If so, these categories are where to focus further investigative efforts for implementing accident prevention.

The Sample Accident Analysis Form on the next page can be used to segment accident cause by individual departments in the company. Similar worksheets can be created to indicate accident type, body part injured, or other relevant categories by departments or job occupations.

