

## Accidents, Near Misses and Incidents: the Importance of Investigation

An accident is defined as an unplanned event that interrupts the completion of an activity, and that may include injury or property damage. A near miss also refers to an unplanned event which has the potential to cause damage, but this time it does not. Both accidents and near misses are types of incidents.

The focus of incident investigation should be on finding the root cause of the incident rather than jumping to a hasty solution or finding fault. Incidents can rarely be attributed to a single cause. Work environment, job constraints, and supervisory or worker experience all play a part in the end result. These factors must be examined to determine what role each played in causing an incident to occur.



Once the investigation is completed an action plan should be developed based on the findings. This could involve reviewing the job procedures or practices, staff training and/or environmental conditions.

What separates an employer with a true safety culture from other employers is that these employers go beyond the legal requirement of reporting injuries to the WCB, to the best practice of investigating all incidents. To find out more about incident investigation, please contact me at 522-5499 or [david.walker@sasktel.net](mailto:david.walker@sasktel.net).



*~David Walker, Safety Advisor*