

Accident Investigation Procedure

When an accident takes place it is important for staff to determine the cause. This helps prevent future accidents. An accident investigation takes place AFTER care has been provided to anyone injured and includes four basic steps:

1. Protect the Scene

2. Document What Happened

3. Determine the Cause

4. Take Corrective Action

**Definitions:**

**Accident -** Any event that results in illness, injury or property damage.

**Incident -** Any unplanned event that disrupts a task and may cause injury or damage.

**Near Miss -** Describes an incident where, given a slight shift in time or distance could have resulted in injury, illness or damage, but didn't this time

For the purposes of these procedures, Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses are investigated and documented in the same manner.

**1. Protect the Scene**

In order to have a good understanding of what happened, aquatic staff should prevent patrons or unauthorized staff from entering the accident area until it has been documented. Barricades like cones, tape or placing staff to prevent entry can all be used.

**2. Document What Happened**

Pictures and/or video of the area should be taken to review later. It is always better to take more pictures than less. Pictures should include general area photos, photos of the exact spot of the accident and any equipment or structures that were involved. For example, if someone was injured on the diving board, pictures of the diving board from multiple angles should be taken to include an potential structural issues with the board.

In addition to pictures, witness statements should be obtained from anyone who saw the accident take place. For any accident where hospitalization is required, copies of the following documents should be added to the accident report:

* Applicable policies/procedures
* Equipment manuals (if applicable)
* Water Chemistry Logs (if accident happened in the water)
* Employee training records
* Copies of previous similar accidents with documented corrective action

**3. Determine the Cause**

Take all the information and start asking a few basic questions to determine why the accident took place. A good place to start are the big six questions:

* Who?
* What?
* When?
* Where?
* Why?
* How?

In addition to the big six question, get detailed and really ask the hard questions to determine the cause.

* Was a procedure not followed?
* If yes, Why was the procedure not followed?
* Was training inadequate?
* Is the procedure a best practice or does it need to be updated?
* If, equipment was involved, did it fail?
* Why did it fail?
* Was the equipment used properly?
* What were the weather conditions?
* Was the bottom of the pool visible?
* Was PPE available and used?

**4. Take corrective Action**

Once a cause is determined, take action to prevent future accidents. This may mean retraining staff, repairing equipment adding a procedure or improving an already established procedure.

**Confidentiality**

Accident reports should only be provided to authorized staff. Release of any accident information to include medical information about victims is strictly prohibited.

**Notes:**

The goal is not to assign blame, but get to the cause and prevent future accidents. Safety is a group effort. At the end of the day, every staff member is responsible for what happens at the facility.