

Incident & Near-Miss Investigation

INSTRUCTOR + PRINT PACKET

AUDIENCE	EST. TIME	REFERENCE
Supervisors, EHS, team leads	35-45 min	OSHA recommended practice / root-cause guidance

IMPORTANT USE NOTE

Best-practice training for investigation quality. Recordkeeping/reporting obligations and company investigation procedures must also be followed.

What is inside this packet

- Instructor quick-start and site-specific preparation checklist
- Slide-by-slide trainer guide with discussion prompts
- Employee handout / key takeaways
- Printable 10-question knowledge check
- Separate answer key and coaching notes
- Attendance record
- Practical / workplace evaluation checklist
- Certificate wording and completion record
- Primary regulatory/source reference

Run a strong session without overcomplicating it.

1. PREPARE	Review the deck and packet. Insert your procedures, equipment, routes, photos, emergency contacts and site rules.
2. PRESENT	Use the PowerPoint/PDF on a screen. Pause for discussion rather than reading every bullet.
3. CHECK	Give the knowledge check. Review missed items and coach to the expected decision.
4. VERIFY	Complete required hands-on or workplace-specific practice/evaluation with an appropriate trainer/evaluator.
5. DOCUMENT	Use the attendance record, evaluation and certificate only after required training elements are complete.

BEFORE EMPLOYEES WORK

Best-practice training for investigation quality. Recordkeeping/reporting obligations and company investigation procedures must also be followed.

Learning objectives

- Secure the scene and gather reliable facts quickly
- Build a timeline using people, equipment, environment and process evidence
- Identify underlying/root causes rather than stopping at “employee error”
- Develop corrective actions that reduce exposure and verify effectiveness

1. Purpose: prevent recurrence

- An investigation is not a blame exercise.
- Near misses and hazard reports deserve the same learning mindset.
- Focus on how the system allowed the event, not only the last action.

DISCUSSION PROMPT

Where could this fail here?

2. First actions

- Care for injured people and control ongoing hazards.
- Preserve evidence when safe and appropriate.
- Meet regulatory/internal reporting deadlines.

DISCUSSION PROMPT

What control do we use?

3. Gather facts

- Interview separately and promptly using open questions.
- Document equipment condition, scene layout, photos, records, procedures and training.
- Separate facts from assumptions.

DISCUSSION PROMPT

What would make you stop?

4. Build the timeline

- Sequence what happened before, during and after the event.
- Look for changing conditions, decisions, handoffs and failed defenses.
- Compare work-as-done with work-as-imagined.

DISCUSSION PROMPT

Where could this fail here?

5. Root causes and contributors

- Ask why conditions existed: design, maintenance, staffing, planning, supervision, training, procedure, procurement or change management.
- Human error is a starting point for questions, not a final root cause.

DISCUSSION PROMPT

What control do we use?

6. Corrective actions and follow-up

- Prefer elimination/engineering controls when feasible over reminders alone.
- Assign owner/date and define how effectiveness will be checked.
- Share learning without exposing unnecessary personal information.

DISCUSSION PROMPT

What would make you stop?

Stop-work / red-flag conditions

- Investigation concludes “employee was careless” with no deeper analysis
- Evidence is discarded before documentation
- Corrective action is only “retrain employee”
- No owner, due date or effectiveness check is assigned

SCENARIO

A worker bypassed a guard to clear a jam. The investigation says “failure to follow procedure.” What questions should come next?

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

Why was bypassing possible/normal? Was the jam frequent? Was safe access practical? Were production pressures, equipment design, maintenance, supervision or training contributors? Identify systemic causes and stronger controls.

Make it site-specific

- Company notification/reporting requirements
- Who leads and who participates in investigations
- Evidence/photo/interview forms and record retention
- Corrective-action approval, tracking and effectiveness review

Incident & Near-Miss Investigation

KEEP THIS PAGE

Key decisions to remember

Purpose: prevent recurrence: An investigation is not a blame exercise.

First actions: Care for injured people and control ongoing hazards.

Gather facts: Interview separately and promptly using open questions.

Build the timeline: Sequence what happened before, during and after the event.

Root causes and contributors: Ask why conditions existed: design, maintenance, staffing, planning, supervision, training, procedure, procurement or change management.

Corrective actions and follow-up: Prefer elimination/engineering controls when feasible over reminders alone.

Stop and get help when...

- Investigation concludes “employee was careless” with no deeper analysis
- Evidence is discarded before documentation
- Corrective action is only “retrain employee”
- No owner, due date or effectiveness check is assigned

Our site-specific information

- ☐ Company notification/reporting requirements
- ☐ Who leads and who participates in investigations
- ☐ Evidence/photo/interview forms and record retention
- ☐ Corrective-action approval, tracking and effectiveness review

Employee notes:

Incident & Near-Miss Investigation - Knowledge Check

Employee: _____ Date: _____

1. The primary purpose of incident investigation is to:

- ☐ A. Identify causes and prevent recurrence
- ☐ B. Assign blame quickly
- ☐ C. Complete paperwork only
- ☐ D. Protect equipment only

2. A good investigation should include:

- ☐ A. Management and worker perspectives where practical
- ☐ B. Only the injured employee
- ☐ C. Only legal staff
- ☐ D. Only the supervisor

3. "Employee error" should usually be:

- ☐ A. A prompt to ask deeper why questions
- ☐ B. The final root cause
- ☐ C. Ignored completely
- ☐ D. Used as the only corrective action

4. Evidence should be:

- ☐ A. Preserved/documented as soon as safe and practical
- ☐ B. Discarded after photos
- ☐ C. Changed to recreate the event
- ☐ D. Collected weeks later only

5. Interviews are stronger when they use:

- ☐ A. Open, non-leading questions
- ☐ B. Threats
- ☐ C. Group pressure
- ☐ D. Assumptions stated as facts

Score: _____ / 10 Passing requirement / retraining criteria:

6. A timeline helps investigators:

- ☐ A. See sequence, changes, decisions and failed defenses
- ☐ B. Choose who to discipline
- ☐ C. Avoid scene evidence
- ☐ D. Replace witness interviews

7. Stronger corrective actions usually:

- ☐ A. Reduce the hazard/exposure through design, engineering or systemic controls
- ☐ B. Rely only on reminders
- ☐ C. Assign blame
- ☐ D. Close immediately without verification

8. Each corrective action should have:

- ☐ A. An owner, due date and effectiveness check
- ☐ B. Only a title
- ☐ C. Only a cost estimate
- ☐ D. Only a policy number

9. Near misses should be:

- ☐ A. Investigated/learned from based on potential and program criteria
- ☐ B. Ignored because no one was hurt
- ☐ C. Deleted from records
- ☐ D. Handled only by security

10. Retraining is always enough as the sole corrective action.

- ☐ A. False
- ☐ B. True

Employee signature: _____

Answer key + coaching notes

1. **A - Identify causes and prevent recurrence** | The primary purpose of incident investigation is to:
2. **A - Management and worker perspectives where practical** | A good investigation should include:
3. **A - A prompt to ask deeper why questions** | “Employee error” should usually be:
4. **A - Preserved/documented as soon as safe and practical** | Evidence should be:
5. **A - Open, non-leading questions** | Interviews are stronger when they use:
6. **A - See sequence, changes, decisions and failed defenses** | A timeline helps investigators:
7. **A - Reduce the hazard/exposure through design, engineering or systemic controls** | Stronger corrective actions usually:
8. **A - An owner, due date and effectiveness check** | Each corrective action should have:
9. **A - Investigated/learned from based on potential and program criteria** | Near misses should be:
10. **A - False** | Retraining is always enough as the sole corrective action.

COACHING RULE

Do not treat a passing written score as proof of hands-on competency. Retrain missed critical concepts and complete workplace-specific verification where required.

Attendance + completion record

Course: Incident & Near-Miss Investigation

Date: _____ Instructor: _____ Department / Location: _____

Employee Printed Name	Employee Signature	Job / Department	Date

Site-specific topics / notes:

Can the employee apply it?

Employee: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Evaluation Item	Meets	Coach	N/A
Secures scene and controls hazards	☐	☐	☐
Separates facts/assumptions	☐	☐	☐
Uses open interview questions	☐	☐	☐
Builds event timeline	☐	☐	☐
Identifies multiple contributing causes	☐	☐	☐
Writes higher-order corrective actions	☐	☐	☐
Assigns owner/due date	☐	☐	☐
Defines effectiveness verification	☐	☐	☐

Comments / coaching:

Result: ☐ Competent for evaluated task (subject to employer authorization) ☐ More training/practice needed

Evaluator signature: _____ Employee signature: _____

CERTIFICATE OF TRAINING

This certifies that

completed the formal / awareness training portion of
Incident & Near-Miss Investigation

Date: _____ Instructor: _____
Employer / Location: _____

Best-practice training for investigation quality. Recordkeeping/reporting obligations and company investigation procedures must also be followed.

Regulatory / source reference

Primary reference: OSHA recommended practice / root-cause guidance

<https://www.osha.gov/incident-investigation>

Before delivery

- Confirm current OSHA and applicable state-plan requirements
- Confirm manufacturer instructions and employer procedures
- Insert workplace-specific hazards, controls, emergency contacts and rules
- Use competent/qualified trainers or evaluators where required
- Complete practical/workplace training and authorization requirements where applicable
- Retain training records according to employer and regulatory requirements

FINAL REMINDER

Best-practice training for investigation quality. Recordkeeping/reporting obligations and company investigation procedures must also be followed.