

Guideline for Coaching Incident Repeaters

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to assist companies with addressing employees who have incurred multiple work-related incidents, commonly referred to as “incident repeaters.” By counseling or conducting formal interviews with the employee, the management team creates an opportunity to help create or improve dialogue between both parties to facilitate a productive problem-solving environment. This document outlines a sample process which may be used to help facilitate such an environment.

During the interview, the management team should be able to identify additional risk factors which may be contributing to the employee incurring multiple incidents. More importantly, this process allows management to re-emphasize its commitment to providing a safe work environment.

Important: This process should not be used to place “blame” on the employee. It should not create a hostile or uncomfortable work environment during or after the interview.

WHEN TO USE

This process is one of many initiatives available to help reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. Remember, there are many factors which could contribute to an employee incurring multiple incidents including but not limited to - work schedule, work conditions, repetitive tasks, fatigue, physical condition of the worker, training, etc.

It is also important to monitor employees with personal or work-related restrictions (transitional duties) to assure that they stay within their restrictions. The second injury may be a result of compensating for an existing injury. Zenith’s Return to Work Specialists can assist in assuring your transitional work program is effective.

You should consider all potential risk factors (including the factors listed above) before implementing this process. In addition, all incidents (including near misses) should be thoroughly investigated to help ensure all risk factors are identified and addressed by the company.

HOW TO USE

The information below should be customized to create a process which reflects the resources available within the company. This process should not substitute or supersede any established company procedures or policies related to disciplinary actions involved in a safety and health violation.

DEFINITION OF MULTIPLE INCIDENTS

Define what should be considered a multiple incident. This may include all workplace-related incidents including but not limited to:

- Near misses
- Property damage
- Motor vehicle crash or collision (if applicable)
- An incident which results in an employee injury requiring first aid treatment
- An incident which results in an employee injury incurring lost time injuries
- An incident which results in the generation of a claim (i.e. medical, property, and/or auto).

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TIMELINE

Determine whether or not a repeat incident includes when an employee incurs two or more incidents within 12, 24, 36 or 60 months.

MANAGEMENT INVOLVEMENT

Depending on the management structure and availability, decide on who will be involved in this process. This may include the immediate supervisor, safety director, or top management.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

Conduct the process steps below that are appropriate for the incident.

Conducting the Interview

- **First Incident** – Proceed with normal incident investigation procedures established at your company. If assistance is needed on how to conduct an incident investigation, see Risk Management Bulletin #101, Accident Investigation.
- **Second Incident** – Repeat procedures outlined in the “First Incident” process step. Next, conduct an incident interview using questions listed in the attached “Sample Interview Questionnaire.” Select at least six questions from the Sample Interview Questionnaire attached.

Management personnel included in the process may involve the employee's immediate supervisor and a human resource representative. If applicable, the human resource representative should facilitate this process.

- **Third Incident** – Repeat procedures outlined in the “First & Second Incident” process steps. In addition to the employee's immediate supervisor and human resource representative, the most available top ranking official of the company (i.e. VP, President, COO, or CEO) should attend this meeting as well. This is an opportunity for management to re-emphasize their position on safety and to encourage the employee to comply with the company's safety and health policies. This also makes the employee more aware that top management is concerned about safety in the workplace. Select at least six questions from the Sample Interview Questionnaire attached.

Results from Questionnaire

Depending on the responses from the employee, make an attempt to further address any situations brought to management's attention and respond accordingly. You may also decide to conduct a full Safety Culture Assessment on a select group of employees or the entire workforce. The purpose of the Safety Culture Assessment is to evaluate the company's safety culture by addressing the following categories:

- Management Demonstrated Commitment to Safety
- Employee Involvement and Commitment
- Effectiveness of the Supervisory Process
- Education and Knowledge of Workers
- Positive Recognition and Reinforcement for Safety Activity

Your Zenith Safety & Health Consultant can assist you further with this initiative.

Closing Remarks

Upon completion of the interview session, mention you are documenting this process and it is being placed in the employee's personnel files. Re-emphasize the company's commitment to safety and:

- Obtain a verbal commitment from the employee to follow safety and health policies/procedures and to report unsafe conditions.
- Remind the employee of the company's disciplinary policy associated with violating a safety and health policies and/or procedures. If applicable, provide written copies of these documents to the employee.
- Thank the employee for being cooperative during the process. Make the employee aware of your plans to further evaluate all issues brought up and the company will determine the next course of actions.

For assistance and additional information, contact your Zenith Safety and Health Consultant

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Below is a list of sample questions to choose from to conduct an employee interview. Depending on the question, be prepared to coach the employee if he/she is unaware of the correct answer.

RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS FOR SECOND INCIDENT PROCESS:

- Do you believe that safety training is adequate for your job requirements?
- Has your supervisor ever conducted an incident investigation concerning any work-related incident that you have had? Was action taken?
- Are you a member of the safety committee? Are you aware that the company has a safety committee? Would you be willing to become a member of our safety committee?
- Do you know who the Safety Committee Representative is for your area?
- Have you ever communicated a safety issue to your Safety Committee? If so, what was the result? Were you content with the result? (*Safety issues may include broken equipment, no PPE available, unsafe work practices*).
- Do you know how to communicate a safety issue to your management team?
- Do you have personal protective equipment available in your work location? Do you use it? Are you required to use it?
- In your work location, what is the primary cause of accidents? (*If employee is unsure, be prepared to provide the answer.*)
- In your opinion, what actions should your area/company take to prevent incidents from occurring?
- Who do you feel is responsible for your safety? (*Response should include "me" or similar.*)

RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS FOR THIRD INCIDENT PROCESS:

- How can the company increase safety and health awareness within the workplace?
- How can the company improve its safety and health training program (i.e. training material, frequency of training, etc.)?
- Is safety taken seriously in your work location? If not, how can management make safety a value within the workplace?
- How can the company provide better opportunities for employees to provide safety suggestions?
- Upon an incident investigation, are corrective actions implemented within a reasonable amount of time?
- What can the management team do to help ensure safety and health hazards are identified and/or addressed immediately?
- How can the management team become more involved with safety? (*Be prepared to share some company initiatives related to safety and health.*)
- How can the management team (including your supervisor) keep you more informed of the hazards associated with your tasks and the workplace?
- Do you believe that you can refuse work that is deemed unsafe without negative consequences? (*Re-emphasize the company's policy*)
- In your opinion, what actions can your company take to prevent incidents from occurring (including your incident(s))?

Zenith provides workplace safety resources at: **TheZenith.com**

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