

FREE MANUFACTURING SAFETY INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE

Incident Investigation Checklist

Use this 60-point checklist to investigate incidents and near misses through response, scene evidence, factual reconstruction, witnesses, causal analysis, required reporting, corrective action, effectiveness, lessons learned, and final approval.

Incident ID / area

Incident date

Event type

Investigator / EHS

Internal manufacturing template. Apply current emergency, incident, EHS, recordkeeping, reporting, worker-participation, and jurisdictional requirements. For U.S. federal OSHA, 29 CFR 1904.39 includes 8-hour fatality and 24-hour severe-injury reporting requirements.

1. Emergency response, scene stabilization, immediate care, and investigation initiation

- 1
- Confirm injured or affected employees received appropriate first aid, emergency medical support, rescue, evacuation, or other immediate care before investigative activity began.**
- CRITICAL
- INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Protect people first. Begin the investigation only after emergency response and hazard control are in place, and avoid disturbing evidence beyond what is...

- 2
- Verify immediate hazards such as energy, fire, chemical release, unstable equipment, traffic, pressure, electrical exposure, or structural risk were controlled without unnecessarily destroying evidence.**
- CRITICAL
- INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Protect people first. Begin the investigation only after emergency response and hazard control are in place, and avoid disturbing evidence beyond what is...

- 3
- Confirm the incident area was secured and access limited to authorized personnel where continued entry could affect safety or evidence integrity.**
- CRITICAL
- INCIDENT

Complete

Needs evidence

Critical gap

LIVE PHOTO | Add

Execution tip: Protect people first. Begin the investigation only after emergency response and hazard control are in place, and avoid disturbing evidence beyond what is...

- 4
- Assign an investigation lead and appropriate team members representing supervision, employees, EHS, maintenance, engineering, quality, or other relevant expertise.**
- INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Protect people first. Begin the investigation only after emergency response and hazard control are in place, and avoid disturbing evidence beyond what is...

- 5
- Confirm the organization initiated required internal escalation for serious, high-potential, repeated, or otherwise significant incidents.**
- CRITICAL
- INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Protect people first. Begin the investigation only after emergency response and hazard control are in place, and avoid disturbing evidence beyond what is...

- 6
- Record incident ID, date and time, location, department, affected employee or activity, supervisor, investigation lead, and initial severity classification.**
- INCIDENT

FINAL STATUS | Enter

INVESTIGATION LEAD | Enter

EHS / MANAGEMENT | Enter

Execution tip: Protect people first. Begin the investigation only after emergency response and hazard control are in place, and avoid disturbing evidence beyond what is...

2. Initial incident facts, event classification, work activity, and known conditions

7

Document the activity being performed, work step, equipment or tools involved, material or substance involved, and location at the time of the incident.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Separate facts from interpretations. Record what is known about the event, task, people, equipment, materials, and environment before asking why it...

8

Classify the event using the organization's approved categories, such as injury, illness, near miss, property damage, equipment damage, environmental release, fire, vehicle event, or high-potential incident.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Separate facts from interpretations. Record what is known about the event, task, people, equipment, materials, and environment before asking why it...

9

Record the immediate outcome, including injury type, affected body part, property damage, process interruption, release, loss, or near-miss potential where applicable.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Separate facts from interpretations. Record what is known about the event, task, people, equipment, materials, and environment before asking why it...

10

Confirm shift, crew, supervisor, staffing level, weather or environmental conditions, lighting, noise, temperature, housekeeping, and other relevant conditions are captured.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Separate facts from interpretations. Record what is known about the event, task, people, equipment, materials, and environment before asking why it...

11

Verify equipment status, production state, maintenance status, alarms, safeguards, permits, procedures, PPE, and process conditions present at the time are recorded.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Separate facts from interpretations. Record what is known about the event, task, people, equipment, materials, and environment before asking why it...

12

Clearly identify information that is confirmed, estimated, disputed, unknown, or still under investigation.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Separate facts from interpretations. Record what is known about the event, task, people, equipment, materials, and environment before asking why it...

3. Scene documentation, photographs, physical evidence, equipment condition, and records preservation

13

Photograph or otherwise document the overall scene, approach routes, equipment positions, controls, guards, materials, floor conditions, warning signs, and relevant surroundings before alteration where safe.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Complete

Needs evidence

Critical gap

LIVE PHOTO | Add

Execution tip: Document the scene before cleanup or repair. Photographs, equipment positions, control settings, damaged parts, marks, and electronic logs can...

14

Capture close-up evidence such as damage, wear, broken components, spills, footprints, skid marks, residues, tool condition, PPE, labels, control positions, or other relevant details.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Complete

Needs evidence

Critical gap

LIVE PHOTO | Add

Execution tip: Document the scene before cleanup or repair. Photographs, equipment positions, control settings, damaged parts, marks, and electronic logs can...

15

Preserve failed components, samples, PPE, tools, parts, materials, damaged items, or other physical evidence when needed for technical analysis.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Document the scene before cleanup or repair. Photographs, equipment positions, control settings, damaged parts, marks, and electronic logs can...

16

Secure relevant electronic evidence such as machine logs, alarm histories, PLC or HMI data, CCTV, access logs, maintenance history, production records, sensor data, or communication records.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Document the scene before cleanup or repair. Photographs, equipment positions, control settings, damaged parts, marks, and electronic logs can...

17

Document any scene changes made for rescue, stabilization, shutdown, cleanup, repair, or production recovery so investigators can distinguish original from post-incident conditions.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Document the scene before cleanup or repair. Photographs, equipment positions, control settings, damaged parts, marks, and electronic logs can...

18

Maintain evidence identification, custody, storage, or traceability appropriate to the seriousness and technical needs of the investigation.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Document the scene before cleanup or repair. Photographs, equipment positions, control settings, damaged parts, marks, and electronic logs can...

4. Witness identification, interviews, employee participation, and information quality

19

Identify employees, contractors, supervisors, responders, maintenance personnel, operators, and others who witnessed the incident or have relevant process knowledge.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Interview witnesses promptly and separately where practical. Use open questions and focus on what they saw, heard, did, and understood rather than...

20

Conduct interviews as soon as reasonably practical while allowing for medical care, emotional condition, language needs, and other appropriate considerations.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Interview witnesses promptly and separately where practical. Use open questions and focus on what they saw, heard, did, and understood rather than...

21

Use open-ended questions to establish what the witness observed, heard, smelled, felt, did, expected, and understood before, during, and after the event.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Interview witnesses promptly and separately where practical. Use open questions and focus on what they saw, heard, did, and understood rather than...

22

Avoid leading questions, blame-focused language, threats, or assumptions that could distort witness accounts or discourage participation.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Interview witnesses promptly and separately where practical. Use open questions and focus on what they saw, heard, did, and understood rather than...

23

Compare witness accounts with physical evidence and records while preserving meaningful differences instead of forcing all statements into one version.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Interview witnesses promptly and separately where practical. Use open questions and focus on what they saw, heard, did, and understood rather than...

24

Document interview date, interviewer, witness role, key factual observations, unresolved questions, and any follow-up evidence requested.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Interview witnesses promptly and separately where practical. Use open questions and focus on what they saw, heard, did, and understood rather than...

5. Timeline, task reconstruction, normal versus actual work, and change review

25

Create a chronological sequence from the last known-normal condition through pre-incident activity, event occurrence, response, and stabilization.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reconstruct the work as it actually occurred, not only as the procedure says it should occur. Compare the normal process, expected controls, and event...

26

Map the task or process steps, including handoffs, decisions, equipment states, material movement, interactions, and control points relevant to the event.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reconstruct the work as it actually occurred, not only as the procedure says it should occur. Compare the normal process, expected controls, and event...

27

Compare actual work practices with current procedures, permits, job plans, training, manufacturer instructions, safe-work rules, or other expected controls.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reconstruct the work as it actually occurred, not only as the procedure says it should occur. Compare the normal process, expected controls, and event...

28

Review recent changes in staffing, production rate, overtime, equipment, tooling, software, materials, suppliers, maintenance, layout, procedure, scheduling, or environmental conditions.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reconstruct the work as it actually occurred, not only as the procedure says it should occur. Compare the normal process, expected controls, and event...

29

Identify abnormal conditions, deviations, interruptions, workarounds, bypasses, missing resources, conflicting priorities, or unexpected events that influenced the sequence.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reconstruct the work as it actually occurred, not only as the procedure says it should occur. Compare the normal process, expected controls, and event...

30

Determine the earliest point at which actual conditions or controls deviated from the expected safe process.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reconstruct the work as it actually occurred, not only as the procedure says it should occur. Compare the normal process, expected controls, and event...

6. Hazard analysis, direct causes, contributing factors, root causes, and control failures

31

Identify the hazardous energy, condition, exposure, motion, chemical, equipment interaction, environmental factor, or other mechanism that directly produced or could have produced harm.

CRITICAL

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Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: OSHA recommends focusing on underlying and systemic causes rather than fault or blame. Ask why the hazard existed and why safeguards, procedures,...

32

Identify contributing factors involving task design, equipment, maintenance, materials, environment, workload, staffing, communication, procedures, training, supervision, or human-machine interaction.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: OSHA recommends focusing on underlying and systemic causes rather than fault or blame. Ask why the hazard existed and why safeguards, procedures,...

33

Determine why existing engineering controls, guards, interlocks, barriers, ventilation, containment, PPE, permits, or other preventive safeguards did not prevent the incident.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: OSHA recommends focusing on underlying and systemic causes rather than fault or blame. Ask why the hazard existed and why safeguards, procedures,...

34

Determine why hazard identification, risk assessment, inspection, monitoring, alarms, supervision, or other detection controls did not identify or correct the condition earlier.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: OSHA recommends focusing on underlying and systemic causes rather than fault or blame. Ask why the hazard existed and why safeguards, procedures,...

35

Use an appropriate root-cause method and avoid stopping at labels such as 'worker error', 'carelessness', or 'failure to follow procedure' without examining the system conditions that made the error possible.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: OSHA recommends focusing on underlying and systemic causes rather than fault or blame. Ask why the hazard existed and why safeguards, procedures,...

36

Document direct causes, contributing factors, root or systemic causes, supporting evidence, and remaining uncertainty separately.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: OSHA recommends focusing on underlying and systemic causes rather than fault or blame. Ask why the hazard existed and why safeguards, procedures,...

7. Reporting, recordkeeping, regulatory notification, and internal communication

37

Determine whether the event is work-related and whether injury or illness recordkeeping requirements apply under the organization's jurisdiction.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reporting obligations depend on jurisdiction and event type. For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify severe-event reporting and injury/illness...

38

For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify any work-related fatality is reported to OSHA within 8 hours as required by 29 CFR 1904.39.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reporting obligations depend on jurisdiction and event type. For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify severe-event reporting and injury/illness...

39

For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify any work-related in-patient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye is reported to OSHA within 24 hours as required by 29 CFR 1904.39.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reporting obligations depend on jurisdiction and event type. For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify severe-event reporting and injury/illness...

40

Confirm applicable State Plan, local, environmental, fire, transportation, workers' compensation, customer, insurer, or other reporting requirements are reviewed where relevant.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reporting obligations depend on jurisdiction and event type. For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify severe-event reporting and injury/illness...

41

Verify required OSHA 300, 301, 300A, internal incident, medical, or other records are completed and retained where applicable.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reporting obligations depend on jurisdiction and event type. For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify severe-event reporting and injury/illness...

42

Confirm incident information is communicated internally to appropriate management, EHS, operations, employee representatives, and affected workgroups without compromising privacy or investigation integrity.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Reporting obligations depend on jurisdiction and event type. For U.S. federal OSHA jurisdiction, verify severe-event reporting and injury/illness...

8. Corrective actions, hierarchy of controls, ownership, due dates, and change control

43

Confirm immediate actions address current exposure while permanent corrective actions are developed from verified incident causes.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Corrective actions should address verified causes and prioritize stronger controls. Where feasible, eliminate the hazard or use engineering controls before...

44

Evaluate corrective actions using the hierarchy of controls and prioritize elimination, substitution, or engineering controls where feasible before relying primarily on administrative controls or PPE.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Corrective actions should address verified causes and prioritize stronger controls. Where feasible, eliminate the hazard or use engineering controls before...

45

Verify each permanent action is linked to a specific direct, contributing, root, or system cause identified in the investigation.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Corrective actions should address verified causes and prioritize stronger controls. Where feasible, eliminate the hazard or use engineering controls before...

46

Assign each action to a named owner with priority, due date, interim controls, required evidence, escalation path, and resources.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Corrective actions should address verified causes and prioritize stronger controls. Where feasible, eliminate the hazard or use engineering controls before...

47

Confirm required procedure, equipment, guarding, automation, maintenance, training, permit, layout, staffing, supplier, or management-system changes follow approved change-control processes.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Corrective actions should address verified causes and prioritize stronger controls. Where feasible, eliminate the hazard or use engineering controls before...

48

Define measurable effectiveness criteria and the evidence needed to show the corrective action reduced or prevented recurrence.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Corrective actions should address verified causes and prioritize stronger controls. Where feasible, eliminate the hazard or use engineering controls before...

9. Effectiveness verification, lessons learned, similar-area review, and preventive deployment

49

Verify corrective-action effectiveness after enough operating time, work cycles, observations, inspections, or other relevant exposure to make the conclusion meaningful.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Do not close an incident because actions were completed. Confirm the changed controls remain in place, the hazard is controlled under normal work, and...

50

Observe the changed work process and confirm controls are functioning and employees are using them as intended under normal operating conditions.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Complete

Needs evidence

Critical gap

[LIVE PHOTO | Add](#)

Execution tip: Do not close an incident because actions were completed. Confirm the changed controls remain in place, the hazard is controlled under normal work, and...

51

Review repeat incidents, near misses, hazard reports, inspections, audit findings, maintenance data, and employee feedback for signs of recurrence or unintended consequences.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Do not close an incident because actions were completed. Confirm the changed controls remain in place, the hazard is controlled under normal work, and...

52

Evaluate similar equipment, tasks, departments, sites, contractors, or processes for the same hazard or systemic weakness identified in the investigation.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Do not close an incident because actions were completed. Confirm the changed controls remain in place, the hazard is controlled under normal work, and...

53

Update risk assessments, procedures, training, preventive maintenance, inspections, design standards, audit focus, or other safety controls where investigation learning applies.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Do not close an incident because actions were completed. Confirm the changed controls remain in place, the hazard is controlled under normal work, and...

54

If corrective action is ineffective or the hazard recurs, reopen or escalate the investigation and reassess causes, scope, controls, and residual risk.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: Do not close an incident because actions were completed. Confirm the changed controls remain in place, the hazard is controlled under normal work, and...

10. Investigation record quality, review, closure, trend analysis, and management sign-off

55

Confirm the investigation record links incident facts, scene evidence, witness information, timeline, causal analysis, reporting decisions, corrective actions, and effectiveness evidence.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: A complete incident record should allow an independent reviewer to reconstruct what happened, why it happened, what was changed, and how...

56

Verify factual evidence, assumptions, disputed information, causal conclusions, and unresolved uncertainties are clearly distinguished in the final report.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: A complete incident record should allow an independent reviewer to reconstruct what happened, why it happened, what was changed, and how...

57

Confirm serious or high-potential investigations receive appropriate review by EHS, technical experts, process owners, employee representatives, legal or regulatory functions, and management as required.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: A complete incident record should allow an independent reviewer to reconstruct what happened, why it happened, what was changed, and how...

58

Trend incidents and near misses by event type, task, equipment, department, shift, hazard, cause, severity, contractor, and corrective-action status to identify recurring risk.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: A complete incident record should allow an independent reviewer to reconstruct what happened, why it happened, what was changed, and how...

59

Use investigation trends to influence safety objectives, hazard assessments, capital improvements, training, maintenance, audits, contractor controls, and management review.

INCIDENT

Investigation item	Current status	Owner	Evidence	Action
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Execution tip: A complete incident record should allow an independent reviewer to reconstruct what happened, why it happened, what was changed, and how...

60

Record final investigation status, reportability decision, verified causes, open or closed actions, residual risk, effectiveness status, investigator, EHS reviewer, process owner, and management approval.

CRITICAL

INCIDENT

FINAL STATUS | Enter

INVESTIGATION LEAD | Enter

EHS / MANAGEMENT | Enter

Execution tip: A complete incident record should allow an independent reviewer to reconstruct what happened, why it happened, what was changed, and how...