

Investigating an Accident

When an accident occurs in the workplace, safety reps have a vital role to play. The SRSC Regulations give you the right to investigate the circumstances of the accident and to gather evidence of the cause. It is extremely important that SoR reps exercise this right since the evidence they produce might be critical if a member needs to make a claim against the trust for compensation. Safety reps also need to use the information gained to ensure that managers fulfil their responsibility to make sure such an accident doesn't happen again.

There should be an agreement with the trust that safety reps are informed immediately an accident occurs. If this is not the case then pursue this through the Health and Safety Committee. Regardless of whether there is such an agreement, make sure that members know to inform you immediately in the event of an accident.

During the investigation you may want to:

- Talk to witnesses, including the victim if possible, and take statements. This is best done immediately before their memory fades.
- Make notes about the scene of the accident – ensure that you don't disturb anything e.g. position of equipment, position of victim, position of witnesses, time, date etc.
- Take photographs of the scene.
- Note the presence of anything unexpected that may have contributed to the accident e.g. fluid on the floor.

You will also want to make sure that the member(s) involved fill in the accident book. All injuries at work, no matter how trivial, should be recorded. If the victim is unable to do this for him or herself then make the entry yourself.

Certain accidents and dangerous occurrences are also reportable to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Make sure that all reportable accidents are notified to the appropriate authority.

In the case of serious accidents contact your Regional Officer immediately.