

## **Top Ten Tips to help you to carry out a good incident investigation**

1. Do not 'go it alone' if you can avoid it. Good investigation requires discussion and it is all too easy to agree with yourself! Different types of people see things from different perspectives and in investigation you want to make use of this.
2. Remember to think things through before you begin. Do not rush in to interview witnesses or walk the site until you have decided what should come first and who is going to do what. Gather your thoughts. Discuss with your 'team.' Find witnesses and make arrangements to interview them properly. Decide carefully when you will do the various necessary tasks.
3. Organise who will be responsible for all the information you will collect and which you will need for your analysis. If this is yourself, then set up a simple but effective system for storing and keeping it safe so that your job is made easier. Make sure none of your data is lent out or left lying around.
4. Set up your 'investigation headquarters' right away. This may sound 'over the top' but it isn't; you need somewhere to put up your Storyboard and Analysis charts so that you can come back to your investigation each day in an orderly way. Even small incidents or near misses (hits) could have been much bigger events; the reason you are investigating is to identify actions which could prevent a much more serious occurrence. Your investigation is extremely IMPORTANT no matter what size the incident.
5. As you gather your data, put it right away onto Post-its and then the Timeline chart. That way you can see in front of you what is emerging. And you can discuss your findings so far with your colleague/team. Using Post-its like this allows flexibility; nothing is fixed. You can move them around - or take them off the chart altogether.
6. Make sure that everyone feels able to input information. TOP-SET® has 'difference' at its core. Make use of this. Be open and accepting. What seems obvious is rarely the answer.
7. Do not discount the apparently naïve idea. The non-expert too can have a very valuable contribution just because they can see with fresh eyes. Is there anyone in your office/establishment whom you have not thought of who could contribute well to the investigation?
8. Arrogance and bullishness have no place in investigation; each individual has equal value in this process. Often the quieter individual, the one who is listening, comes up with the gem.
9. Listen to others. Sometimes someone else's idea triggers something in your own mind. It's OK to piggy-back on the ideas of others.
10. Be open minded; it is dangerous to be fixated on any idea. Use the TOP-SET® indicators to direct you in different directions. Allow them to stimulate your own thinking. Remember, you are looking for truth, not convenient coat-hangers. And sometimes you just have to live with uncertainty. A good investigator can do that and can base their recommendations on what they have found without needing A SINGLE ANSWER.