



Toolkit

# The Ultimate Guide to the Importance of Incident Reporting

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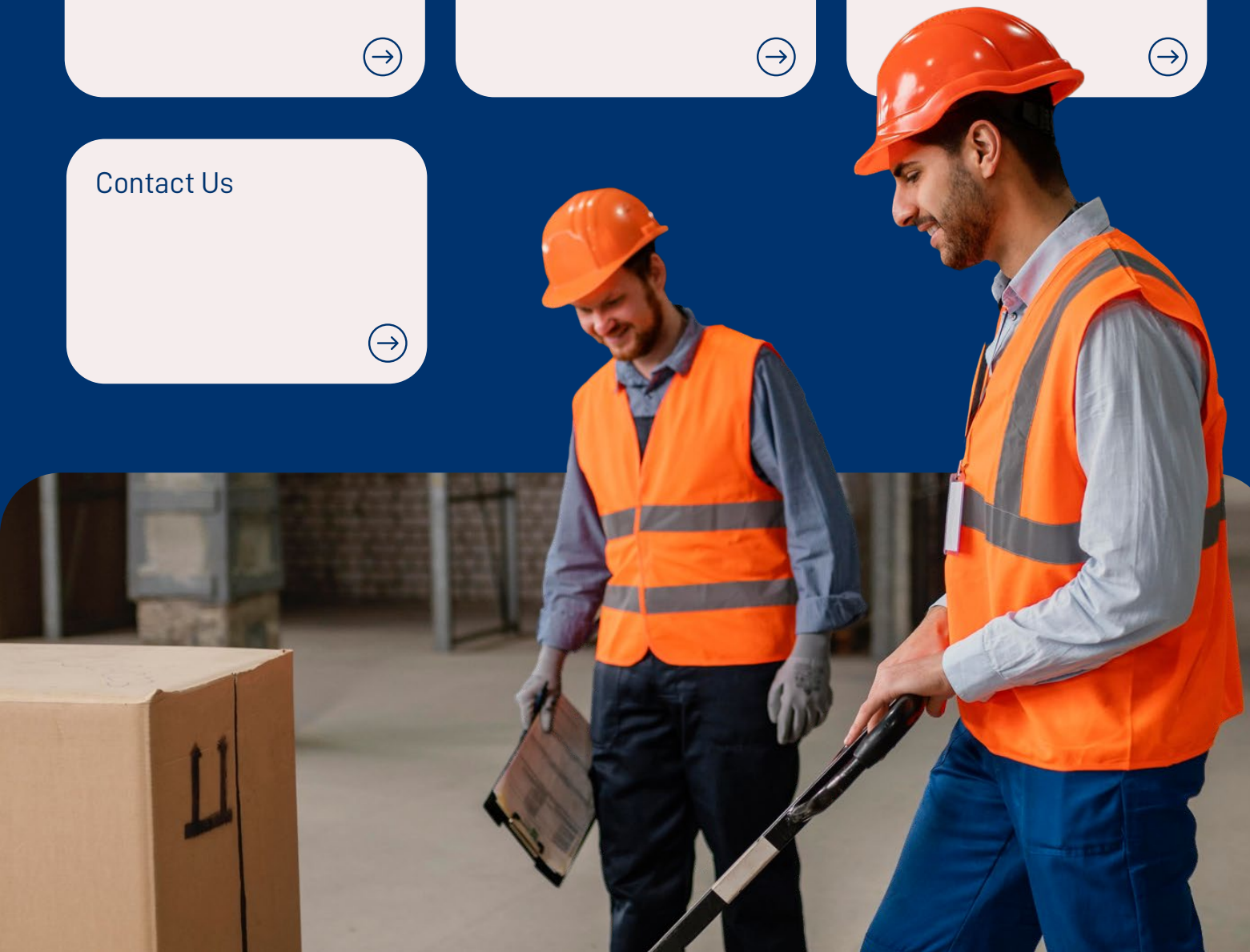
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# 01 Introduction

**Incident reporting is a crucial step for ensuring health and safety in the workplace.**

Regardless of accident severity, every little detail should be reported – otherwise, it might happen again on a much larger scale.



OSHA requires that businesses with more than 10 employees keep a record of workplace incidents, but many senior managers still don't know how to accurately record them.

In this toolkit, we'll outline incident reporting that will lead to a safe and secure workplace.

# 02

## What Is Incident Reporting?

**Incident reporting is the action of recording an incident such as an injury or damage to equipment or property.**

Incident reporting is often documented on an incident reporting form – **which is completed by collecting as much data as possible about the incident that took place.**

It's important to note that this data must comprise cold, hard facts rather than fluffy opinions or biased statements about what happened.

The form should also include evidence of the incident (photos, video footage or illustrations) as well as signatures from the people impacted or witnesses to further provide legitimacy.

Recording detailed information in this way protects organizations when it comes to inspections and insurance claims, and also helps prevent the incident from repeating itself again.



Once an incident report is filled out, an investigation into the incident is conducted. This is then followed by the roll-out of preventative safety measures or staff training to ensure similar incidents don't occur in future. Then, staff training and further awareness linked to the incident is carried out.





# 03

## Importance of Incident Reporting

We've outlined the top five reasons for reporting incidents below:

### 01 Preventing even more serious incidents from occurring

By proactively reporting incidents and near misses, companies can put mechanisms in place to mitigate these incidents before they endanger or harm another employee.

Such strategies may include reviewing SIF (serious, injury and fatality) incidents to ensure they're reduced.

### 02 Enhancing understanding of risks in the workplace

Regular reporting of incidents can ensure that an organization stays on top of safety risks every day.

By encouraging all workers – whether on the factory floor or senior management – to report incidents across the spaces they're working in, all areas of the workplace are covered.

This helps cultivate a collective understanding of the diverse risks that can appear across different areas of the business.

### 03 Ensuring compliance with regulations

Reporting of incidents also helps to ensure you're staying compliant with the regulations. Organizations without a sufficient incident reporting mechanism risk being penalized.

In the US, OSHA requires that employers report fatalities within 8 hours, and severe injuries including in-patient hospitalization, amputation or eye loss within 24 hours.

The consequences of not reporting depend on the seriousness of the incident, but penalties can range from fines imposed on the business, to up to two years imprisonment for the person (or people) responsible for the incident.

Incidentally, by regularly reporting these incidents, you'll be able to get a better grasp on the key health and safety challenges facing your workforce and where to focus your attention.

### 04 Saving time, money and resources

Besides reputational damage, companies that fail to adequately report accidents stand to lose financially, too.

The higher the incident rate, the more costs incurred for the business – with the total cost of workplace injuries costing US businesses \$163.9 billion in 2020.

This figure includes lost productivity due to time injured employees had to spend off work.



## 05 Enabling active engagement of health and safety

Proactive reporting helps organizations create a culture of engagement and further promote all things health and safety. The benefits of creating a positive culture are plentiful, including, of course, the reduction of actual incidents.

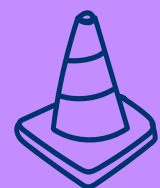
Having well-trained employees who are knowledgeable on the risks in their workplace also decreases the chance of productivity being stalled should an incident occur, as they'll know how to handle various situations.

Many businesses see a boost in overall employee morale. Feeling safe and secure at work is likely to alleviate stress, meaning employees are able to carry out their duties more effectively. Having a good safety record is also great for your reputation, giving you a bigger pool of qualified candidates to recruit, as well as making your existing employees more likely to stick around.

Creating a culture of reporting has the impact of continuously promoting active engagement around an organization.

As employees share best practices and learn from each other's experiences, they can help boost their own well-being through a greater understanding of incidents and how to prevent them.

A positive reporting mindset helps establish a workplace of camaraderie, understanding and partnerships – decreasing the risk of employees developing mental health problems as a result of feeling unsafe or isolated at work.



# 04

## Types of Incidents That Require Reporting

There are several types of incidents that companies need to keep an eye out for.

The most common types of incidents are listed below:



### Slips, Trips and Falls

One of the “Fatal Four” leading causes of construction deaths (alongside being struck by equipment and electrocutions), are falls that often occur as a result of bad lighting, slanted flooring, cables and liquid spillages. According to the CDC, such incidents account for 26% of all nonfatal injuries in American workplaces.



### Electrocutions

Electrocutions are also a common incident to watch for. While the Electrical Safety Foundation International noted a 24% decrease in fatal electrical injuries over 2020, nonfatal electrical injuries rose by 17% over the same period – suggesting that more businesses need to take additional precautions to protect their employees from electrical hazards.



### Struck-by-objects

These types of injuries occur when a worker is hit by an object or piece of equipment that’s falling, rolling, sliding, slipping or swinging – such as books on a shelf or a moving car. Alongside electrocutions, falls and getting caught between objects, struck-by-object incidents account for 60% of all construction-related deaths.



### Near Misses

A near miss is an incident that, while not actually causing injury, has the potential to cause harm. Research has shown that for every 90 near miss incidents that take place, an accident will occur.



# 05

## Incident Reporting Checklist

When writing up an incident report, include these key elements:

Incident type (a SIF, near miss, adverse event or no harm event)

Where the incident took place (specific location within facility)

Date of incident

Time of incident

Description of the injury/damage incurred

Contact information of parties involved and witnesses

Any pictures or video footage of the incident/property damage

In-depth description of the incident

- How the incident occurred
- Results of incident
- Safety equipment involved
- Person involved statement
- Witness statement
- Relevant notes

Treatment of the injury

Cleaning up of associated area

Analysis of the incident

- Cause of incident
- Health and safety breaches
- Steps to remove incident

Prevention strategies for any similar risk in future



# 06

## How To Effectively Manage Incidents

There's no doubt that effective incident reporting is a key link in the chain when it comes to promoting a safe workplace.

The only issue is that many organizations rely on manual processes – stunting their ability to accurately record and rapidly respond to incidents.



If you're serious about enacting real change that'll make your workplace safer and healthier, **we suggest using software that will help streamline the process.**

Here are several key attributes of an EHS software solution that will help you manage incidents and incident reporting:



Pre-configured template builders to enable your organization to **create customizable forms that fit your specific processes**



Action tracking to **completion**



Access to **easy-to-use dashboards** that enable you to easily spot trends and prevent recurrences of incidents



To learn more about real life scenarios around incident management, check out our podcast, Two Bald Guys Talking Safety.

Langdon and Jules discuss **"If Workplace Safety Incident Investigations Were Left to Magnum PI"** in episode 208 that moves past the importance of incident management and how to spot hazards to incident investigations, arguably the most important part of incident management.

Listen here



**US**  
Chicago

+1 (872) 215 5913

**UK**  
London  
Manchester  
Glasgow

+44 (0) 161 521 8490

**AU**  
Melbourne  
Perth

+61 3 8595 5909

# Let's chat

[contact@evotix.com](mailto:contact@evotix.com)

Our Evotix team is passionate about applying market leading technology to create safer, smarter workplaces, partnering with organizations that value people's safety, communities and the planet.

As safety professionals and long-term leaders in the Verdantix EHS Green Quadrant, our deep and practical insight addresses your evolving needs, helping you achieve your health, safety and sustainability goals.

**Evotix: your all-around partner for the journey.**

