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Safety Media

5 Simple Rules for Effective Incident Reporting

Foreword

Incident reporting is essential. No matter what steps are taken, training is given and precautions are taken, there will always be an element of accidents and incidents that occur in any environment. Whether it be tripping, slipping, dropping things, scratching cars, stubbing toes, falling from a height, being hit by an opening door, TVs falling off walls… things happen.

The way in which organisations then handle such eventualities can be quite reflective of the inner workings of the organisation itself:

- Is a company still stuck in the 80s using an Incident Reporting book kept in reception gathering dust and presenting a GDPR nightmare?

- Has the company moved into the late 90s or even 00s and record things using Excel spreadsheets? (Did you know Excel is turning 33 this year?!)

- Is the company bang up to date with modern solutions allowing for efficiency and increased access and uptake of procedures?

Do you know where your company falls on the scale above…

1 - Make it Accessible

Whatever system you choose to use to manage your incident reporting, make sure that all of your employees have access to the system. From your office staff to your field sales team, the people in the manufacturing plant down the road and the contractors coming on site. Everyone should know how to appropriately report incidents that occur while under your care.

- Is there an app you want them to use?

- If you still use a book where is it kept and who is responsible for it?

- Do you require any additional evidence such as photos or witness statements?

- Is there a requirement to tell anyone after an incident has been reported?

- What s people are travelling on business, what does that mean for reporting an incident?

2 - Make it Relevant

Any solution you use should be relevant and adaptable to your individual needs. Every organisation is different so why should anyone assume one product is suitable for everyone? Make sure your own areas of concern are covered – for example; you don't need a fancy vehicle incident reporting function if you don't have any company vehicles…but you might need a personal injury graph to see whereabouts most bodily injuries occur…

● Does your current solution meet the individual needs of the organisation?

● Who in the business NEEDS to be informed about different types of incidents?

● What happens if there are RIDDOR reportable incidents - is there suitable data in your current system to meet all of the requirements?

● Do the reports reflect the information needed or are they reporting on unnecessary elements which could potentially be wasting crucial time which could be better spent elsewhere?

3 - Make it Known

Whatever your system is, it is no use to your organisation if your employees don't know about it.

Look at your communication methods and make sure you receive support to get your employees using your chosen system. All too often great systems are implemented by the board or one department but not communicated internally so no one else knows about it...make sure you consider the wider teams and how to make sure they are as well informed as you are.

- If a visitor were to walk into your organisation and fall over in reception while someone from the IT team happened to be walking by. Would the employee from the IT department know how to report the incident, who to report it to and critically what information from the visitor would be required?

- Is the system for reporting so complicated that when faced with an actual incident it would simply add to the anxiety of the individual?

- Have you considered something as simple as putting a poster up in the canteen or bathrooms - the places where people spend down time - actually letting them know about what to do if they trip on their way out of the door?

- Are your employees open to reporting incidents or do they fear repercussions / accusations?

4 - Make Time to Train

Using any system is simple if you know how to use it, especially if you are the one that created, implemented or instigated the system in the first place. Make sure that everyone else who needs to know has a suitable level of training. For example, all staff may need to know how to report an incident, but only some of them will need to be involved in the management of the incident, for example reporting to the HSE or at a

Board Level and taking steps to prevent re-occurrences etc.

- It is worth considering what would be the easiest way to train your employees on your Incident Reporting system - Do they respond to: Videos, Webinars, Newsletter pieces, Incentives, Classroom training, e-Learning courses, peer training, team by team training....?

- If the person who administers your Incident Reporting system was suddenly unavailable or decided to travel round Africa for 2 months, would anyone else in the organisation know how to take over the system or is it so bespoke and convoluted that only one person will ever be able to get the value out of it that you require?

- Is your system based on standard principles but has been personalised to your own needs or is it a system put together by an individual and been built on over years?

5 - Make it Work Hard

You should be constantly evaluating your systems to make sure they are the best solution for you at the current time. Incident reporting systems are no different. Processes, technologies, laws, best practices, requirements change all the time. You need to constantly assess to make sure you are not falling behind the curve and relying on potentially out of date, but familiar, ways of working.

- When was your system last updated?

- Have you seen something in an industry publication or heard something at a conference that made you feel embarrassed of your own system or methods of working?

- If you are using or considering a software solution, how is your provider keeping ahead of the competition and importantly keeping your data safe?

- If your current system isn't a system you would recommend to anyone in a similar position to yours then why are you even using it?

Editors Note:

A lot of this might seem like common sense, which of course it is, but when did you last put into practice these 5 rules and ask yourself these vital questions? If you were able to tick every rule then I applaud you and sincerely encourage you to keep up the good work. It is people such as you who are going to make the health and safety industry a better industry to work in. If any of these steps have give you pause for thought and you are therefore considering looking for something different then Safety Media, offers a complete Incident Reporting Tool built into the Enterprise solution.

To see how Safety Media can help you tick off those 5 points, request a one to one demo today, our experts are there to help find you the right solution for needs. For additional information about any of the Safety Media solutions please do not hesitate to contact us on (+44) 845 075 6000 or visit the website www.theaccessgroup.com/healthandsafety.
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Thanks for reading!

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