**12.01.02 ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

**1.1 REFERENCE**

WAC 296-305-01503

**2.0 POLICY**

**2.1** After the emergency actions following incidents that cause serious injuries with immediate symptoms or exposure to occupational disease causing chemical or physical agents, a preliminary investigation of the cause of the incident shall be conducted. The investigation shall be conducted by a person designated, trained and qualified by the Chief of the Department or the Department Health and Safety Officer. The findings of the investigation shall be documented for reference at any time following formal investigations.

**2.1.2** Within eight hours after the fatality or probable fatality of any firefighter or employee from a work-related incident or the inpatient hospitalization, hospitalizations, loss of eye, and non-admitted amputations of any employee as a result of a work-related incident, the employer of any employees so affected, shall orally report the fatality/hospitalization by telephone 1-800-423-7233 (1-800-4BESAFE) or in person, to the nearest office of the department.

**2.1.3** Equipment involved in an accident resulting in an immediate or probable fatality, shall not be moved, until a representative of the division of occupational Health and Safety and the Department of Labor and Industries investigates the accident and releases such equipment, except where removal is essential to prevent further accident. When necessary to remove the victim, such equipment may be moved only to the extent of making possible such removal.

**2.1.4** Upon arrival of the Department of Labor and Industries’ investigator, The Health and Safety Officer or designee shall assign as many personnel as are deemed necessary to assist the Department of Labor and Industries in conducting the investigation.

**2.2** The XXXXX shall preserve all records, photographic materials, audio, video, recordings, or other documentation concerning an accident for a period of seven years.

**2.3** Accident information will be shared with personnel.

**3.0 DEFINITIONS**

**N/A**

**4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

**4.1** The duties of the Health and Health and Safety Officer include ensuring that all reportable accidents are investigated and reported.

**4.2** The Health and Safety officer will be responsible to define corrective action andshall ensure that accident reporting procedures are initiated as necessary per Department policy.

**5.0 GUIDELINES**

**5.1** The purpose of an investigation is to find the cause of an accident and prevent further occurrences, not to fix blame. An unbiased approach is necessary to obtain objective findings.

**5.1.1** Interview the injured party and available witnesses, as soon as possible, to determine the following:

1. Circumstances preceding and surrounding the incident -- what were underlying and contributing causes, as well as immediate causes?
2. What physical hazards existed at the time of the accident, such as unprotected openings, or housekeeping, slippery surfaces, protruding nails, etc?
3. Were defective tools, equipment or materials provided to workers -- or were they improperly used?
4. Was personal protective equipment provided, was PPE defective, not used, or used improperly?
5. Did unsafe work practices contribute to the incident, including improper lifting or handling of materials?
6. What Health and Safety rules or Health and Safety training might have prevented the accident?
7. What unsafe conditions or unsafe actions were caused by a third party, i.e., another Department or a contractor?

**5.1.2** If possible, interview injured individuals at the scene of the accident and "walk through" a re-enactment. Be careful not to repeat the act that caused the injury.

**5.1.3** Privacy is important during interviews. Interview witnesses one at a time. Talk with anyone who has knowledge of the accident, even if they did not actually witness the mishap. Express sincere appreciation to anyone who helped with the investigation.

**5.1.4** Record names, addresses and statements of witnesses. Consider taking signed, dated statements if facts are unclear or an element of controversy exists.

**5.1.5** If a third party or defective product contributed to the accident, save any evidence. It could be critical to the recovery of claim costs.

**5.1.6** In major incidents, use sketches, diagrams and photos, to document details graphically. Take measurements when appropriate.

**5.1.7** Define corrective actions that should be taken to prevent re-occurrence. Time tables must be established as to when the corrective action must be completed. Every investigation should include an action plan.

**6.0 ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**