

No./Title: RS – 103 Accident/Incident Investigation	Resp. Office: Research Safety	Effective Date: 06/30/2020
Category: Office of Research Safety	Last Review: 6/30/17	Next Review: 06/30/2023
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Related Policies: HR0580 – Code of Conduct ; RS102 – Incident Reporting		

PURPOSE/SCOPE/APPLICABILITY

Purpose: The intent of this policy is to describe the process for investigating research-related incidents. Accident/incident investigations is a component of comprehensive injury prevention programs. Non-injury accidents (also known as near misses) shall be reported using the incident report form, which is available from the Workers Compensation Office.

Scope and Applicability: This procedure shall apply to students, visitors, staff and faculty involved in research at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center or on university property. It shall also apply to students, visitors, staff and faculty engaged in off-site, university-sponsored research activities.

Definitions, Acronyms, and Abbreviations

Accident: An incident resulting in damage or injury.

Illness: Any abnormal condition or disorder, other than one resulting from an occupational injury, caused by exposure to factors associated with employment. Some of the common types of occupational illnesses include asthma and other respiratory problems, pesticide poisoning, Hepatitis B among workers handling human blood and body fluids, and influenza and other communicable diseases among healthcare workers.

Incident: An event or occurrence that is problematic in nature. Examples include accidents, exposure events, spills, protocol non-compliance, etc.

Hazardous Agent: Chemical, biological or radiological materials or energy with hazards identified in the Safety Data Sheet or known cause harm to living organisms or the environment.

Near-miss: A narrowly avoided accident, also known as a close call or non-injury accident. Such incidents may alert workers to hazardous conditions or unacceptable risks.

Procedure

1. Employees must report accidents/injuries and hazardous agent exposures to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
2. Supervisors must report incidents in accordance with the Office of Research Safety Affairs procedure for Incident Reporting. If the incident resulted in, or had the potential to result in, a serious injury or property loss it should be reported to the Office of Research Safety Affairs immediately.
3. In the event of an injury, occupational illness or hazardous agent exposure, employees or the involved employee must call the CorVel 24-hour nurse line at 1-866-245-8588 before seeking follow-up medical care.
4. When an accident occurs, the employee's supervisor or lead employee should investigate the accident. The area where the accident occurred should be viewed and statements should be obtained from any witnesses. Questions regarding the accident/incident report should be direct to the Risk Management Office. A Supervisors Report of Employee Accident form is available at: <http://finance.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/forms/Incident-Report.pdf>
5. The Office of Research Safety Affairs shall review all claims received by the Corvel system. It shall investigate those where a hazard is present, where appropriate safety procedures were not followed or where personal protective equipment was not used or was defective. The Risk Management Office may forward other claims (property loss, visitor accidents) and incident reports to the Office of Research Safety for review and investigation.
6. The Office of Research Safety Affairs will conduct a more detailed investigation and can also be contacted to investigate an accident if the supervisor:
 - Has reason to suspect that there may be fraud involved.
 - If there is a safety hazard present that can't be removed or repaired promptly.
 - If litigation is likely
 - If a serious process failure exists that is likely to result in additional accidents or losses.
7. If any action is necessary resulting from the investigation conducted by the Office of Research Safety the findings will be forward to the appropriate supervisor and/or department head. The Office of Research Safety will track the status of any recommendations from the investigation.

Record Keeping

1. The Risk Management Office shall maintain all records of accidents, claims and incidents for at least five years. EHS shall maintain records associated with investigations for at least five years.
2. Documentation and records of accidents and losses that are expected to result in litigation or take years to settle shall be kept more than five years.