

Investigating incidents to prevent serious harm

Incident investigation plays a critical role in preventing serious incidents and fatalities. Effective investigations help organizations see what happened, why it happened and how to prevent similar events in the future.

This model encourages organizations to use an energy-based approach when investigating incidents, near misses and high-risk events. By examining whether hazardous energy was present, released or inadequately controlled, organizations can better assess the potential severity of an event—even if the outcome was minor.

The investigation process escalates issues based on risk, not outcome. Incidents with high-energy hazards or weak controls need more leadership attention and thorough analysis, even if no serious injury occurs. This helps ensure organizations learn lessons before a more severe event happens.

The purpose of investigation under this model is learning and improvement. Investigations should focus on:

- identifying gaps or failures in controls,
- understanding how work conditions and decisions contributed to the event, and
- tracking corrective and preventive actions to completion.

Using this approach helps organizations strengthen systems, improve controls and lower the risk of serious incidents and fatalities.

