

Checklist for actions following a serious/catastrophic event or fatality accident

The death of one or more of your employees is a traumatic event, and there are a number of things to think about after the initial emergency response. The following is a guide on what is required by law. It also provides other information to help you and your employees through this difficult situation. (This checklist assumes that emergency responders have already been called and have responded to the scene.)

On the day of the accident

- Emergency services may provide additional guidance, including access to a coroner if needed.
- Secure and preserve the accident scene and limit access to those are authorized to be there (**437-001-0053 Preserving Physical Evidence at the Scene of an Accident** (bit.ly/3VVqZwl)). The scene should be preserved until officials have completed their work.
- Notify company executives/owners.
- Determine who within your organization is “in charge” of the accident scene and who will serve as the official company contact for information.
- Notify OR-OSHA within eight hours (sooner if possible) at 800.321.6742 (**437-001-0704 Reporting Fatalities and Injuries to Oregon OSHA** (bit.ly/3vRTLnt)). Work cooperatively with OR-OSHA and all other law enforcement or fire department authorities. (In an emergency response, you surrender control of the area to these authorities.)
- Determine who will notify immediate family members and confirm it will be done with tact and good judgment. Prepare a plan to notify your workforce before they hear about it from an external source.
- Notify SAIF Corporation to initiate the workers’ compensation claims process. SAIF has safety, claims, and investigations professionals who can assist you. For a fatality accident, call 800-285-8525 (Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). After business hours, leave a detailed message, including your contact information. Someone will get back to you the following business morning.
- Document the accident scene, including the equipment or process involved, through photos, video, written observations, sketches, diagrams, measurements, etc.
- Collect the names and contact information of all witnesses including employees, management, or the general public. OR-OSHA and SAIF will conduct investigations, so it may not be necessary for you to collect witness statements yourself. Be sensitive to the emotional impact this event may have on witnesses.
- Consider releasing workers to go home after they have provided their statements.
- Offer counseling assistance to affected employees. Although counseling is not a SAIF insurance benefit, counseling services, Employee Assistance Programs, Hospice, hospital and emergency services chaplains, and local churches often have counselors or can refer you to someone who can meet with your employees.
- Prepare for the possibility of media inquiries. Make sure all employees know to refer these inquiries to the official company contact assigned above as the only person authorized to provide statements to the media.

During the next few days

- Complete a thorough accident analysis (**437-001-0760 Rules for all Workplaces (3) Investigations of Injuries** (bit.ly/3vTpt3z)). One of the primary reasons for this analysis is to seek information that will help protect other employees. SAIF Corporation and OR-OSHA have injury analysis resources available on the web. Both are available at this link (saif.com/analysis).
- Once the major contributing factors are known, take steps necessary to help prevent future injuries and illnesses. This may include employee and management training, system changes, procedure changes, accountability systems, etc.
- Stay in contact with the family members of the injured. Offer counseling resources and help explain any benefits that may be provided. Consider sending condolence cards, flowers, or assisting with meals and other efforts to help them through the difficult first few days.
- Continue to offer counseling assistance to employees. Coach your supervisors about the potential psychological impact this can have on employees and equip them with knowledge and tools to support or refer as needed.
- Inform employees about injury causes and steps taken to prevent future occurrences.