

# PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATORS



March 2011

[www.dos.state.pa.us](http://www.dos.state.pa.us)

## Workers Compensation and Accident Investigations

by Richard J. Bruno, NHA

Providing a safe environment for employees requires diligent effort on the part of nursing home administrators to insure that safe practices are being promoted and followed by all staff.

When the unfortunate event of an employee injury occurs, the opportunity to identify the cause of the injury, together with the ability to establish prevention for similar injuries, is rooted in the investigation of the injury.

Investigations of worker compensable injuries are similar to those investigations conducted for any injury occurring to anyone in the facility. An incident report should outline the specifics of the injury, together with all pertinent information that is needed to identify what caused the injury. Timing of the incident report, as well as the investigation, is of utmost importance, as failure to conduct a prompt investigation can lead to loss of information and more injuries due to the same, or similar cause. Bob Lauzonis, loss control specialist for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), noted in a recent article the main reasons to conduct prompt investigations are that the event is fresh in the minds of employees, the physical circumstances of the incident have not dramatically changed, and any witnesses to the event are still available.

Proper, thorough investigations will lead us to proper corrective action. In his article, Lauzonis identifies key parameters for an employee accident investigation:

- The investigator needs to have all the preliminary information available regarding the accident, the person injured and the injury itself. You may need information regarding similar accidents that have happened in the past.
- Interview witnesses and do not lose the opportunity to discuss with the injured person, when available, the details regarding occurrence of the accident, and to

obtain that person's recommendation for eliminating the hazard which caused the injury. Use a camera if available.

- Document your efforts. Every accident investigation report should contain:
  - All information regarding the injured person
  - What the employee was supposed to be doing
  - What was actually being done at the time of the accident
  - How it was being done
  - Training the person has received
  - Past accident record

Examine the tools, machinery, protective equipment, work setting, office and other physical conditions as they existed at the time and place of the accident.

Once a proper, thorough investigation is completed, the resultant identification of the cause of the injury requires us to implement corrective actions to insure the same, or similar types of causations are prevented. As Lauzonis states, "the prevention of any injury is the best type of loss control." In this respect, nursing home administrators are constantly striving to identify methods to reduce, or eliminate workplace hazards that can cause staff injuries. Such actions cover a spectrum of efforts, from using 'no-lift' policies for nursing staff, to ensuring proper disciplinary actions are taken for any employee who is injured due to failure in following established policies and procedures.

Additional assistance is available from the loss control specialist assigned to your facility through your workers compensation insurance carrier. Such specialists are trained in a myriad of aspects with regard to reduction of risks and, many times, the loss control specialist can identify methods of risk reduction that may not be apparent to those working in the facility. Working with your workers compensation carrier and loss control specialist can only help your efforts to reduce and eliminate workplace hazard risks.

[Contact Us](#)

[Report Unethical Activity](#)

[Renew Your License](#)

[Meet the Board](#)

[PHMP](#)