

UT Health Science Center: RS103 Accident-Incident Investigation	
Version 2	Publication Date: 05/13/2024

Objective

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

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

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

- I. Employees must report accidents/injuries and hazardous agent exposures to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
- II. Supervisors must report incidents in accordance with the Office of Research Safety Affairs (RSA) 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 RSA immediately.
- III. Employees that are injured, exposed to a hazardous material, or who experience symptoms of a potential research-related illness must notify their supervisor immediately. They must contact the Corvel 24/7 nurse line at 1-866-245-8588 after moving to a safe environment and obtaining the necessary first aid. Corvel must be called within 48 hours of the incident and before seeking follow-up medical treatment. Employees must then

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- notify UT Risk Management by completing the On-the-job Injury form accessible through the [UT Incident Report website](#).
- IV. Students or visitors that are injured, exposed to a hazardous material or who experience symptoms of a potential research-related illness must notify their supervisor or UTHSC liaison. The supervisor or UTHSC liaison must complete they must then notify UT Risk Management by visiting the [UT Incident Report website](#), selecting General Liability and completing the online form.
 - V. When an accident occurs, the employee’s supervisor or lead employee should investigate the accident. The area where the accident occurred should be examined 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>
 - VI. The RSA shall review claims received by the Corvel system. RSA shall investigate those where a hazardous material is implicated, where appropriate safety procedures were not followed or where personal protective equipment was not used or was defective.
 - VII. Near-misses and reported concerns will also be investigated.
 - VIII. The Risk Management Office may forward other claims (property loss, visitor accidents) and incident reports to RSA for review and investigation.
 - IX. The RSA 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.
 - VII. If any action is necessary resulting from the investigation conducted by RSA the findings will be forward to the appropriate supervisor and/or department head. RSA will track the status of any recommendations from the investigation.

Record Keeping

- I. The Risk Management Office shall maintain all records of accidents, claims and incidents for at least five years. RSA shall maintain records associated with investigations for at least five years.
- II. 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.

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Responsible Official & Additional Contacts

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Research Safety Affairs	901-448-6114	safety@uthsc.edu
Policy Training	Research Safety Affairs	901-448-6114	safety@uthsc.edu
Accident/Incident Investigation	Research Safety Affairs	901-448-6114	safety@uthsc.edu

Related Policies/Guidance Documents

[University of Tennessee Health Science Center Code of Conduct](#)

[University of Tennessee Health Science Center Incident Reporting](#)