

Investigation Process

What triggers an investigation by the N.C. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Division?

- A worker's death.
- Hospitalization of an employee, an amputation or the loss of an eye.
- The department may also receive information of a fatality or catastrophe from media reports or referrals from other government agencies.

How is the NCDOL OSH Division notified?

- An employer must notify NCDOL within eight hours of any work-related fatality. In-patient hospitalizations of one or more employees, any work-related amputation, and any work-related loss of an eye must be reported within 24 hours.

What will the investigation focus on?

- The investigation will usually be limited to the events surrounding the accident unless observations at the site indicate a broader investigation is needed.

What will happen during the investigation?

- An OSH investigator will go to the accident site and collect physical evidence, including photographs.
- The investigator will interview employees, witnesses and management officials about the accident to determine its cause.
- Any violations of safety and health standards will be noted and citations will be issued.

How long will the investigation take?

- An investigation can take anywhere from a few weeks to six months, depending on the complexity of the accident.

When are investigation results disclosed?

- Citations and penalties, if issued, can be released to the public on the issuance date.
- Other contents of the file cannot be released until the case is closed or final order on citations is rendered.

The Investigation

OSH investigators will seek to determine several factors, including:

- What was the cause of the accident.
- Whether a violation of OSH safety or health standards related to the accident occurred.
- What effect the standard violation had on the occurrence of the accident.
- Whether OSH standards should be revised in light of the hazardous working condition that led to the accident.



Cherie Berry, Commissioner

N.C. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Division
1101 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1101
www.nclabor.com
1-800-625-2267

What programs does the Department of Labor have in place to prevent accidents?

Free training: Workshops, training and consultation in both English and Spanish.

Publications: Brochures and industry guides that address various hazards.

Special Emphasis Programs: OSH Special Emphasis Programs target industries with high risk for serious or fatal work-related injuries or illnesses.

Alliances and partnerships: With industry groups and companies to prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the workplace.