

RIIWHS301E

Conduct Safety and Health Investigations

Learner Guide Instructions

Who is this document for?

The learner.

What is in this document?

- Course information that matches the PowerPoint presentation.
- Review questions.
- Practical assessment instructions for learners.

What do you need to do before you use it for the first time?

1. Rebrand the document.
2. Review the document as part of your validation process.
3. Set the reading and test time limits that are highlighted in pink at the end of the document.

See the 'Read Me First' document for a complete set of instructions on how to use these resources.

LEARNER GUIDE

RIIWHS301E Conduct Safety and Health Investigations

Learner Name:	
Learner ID:	
Learner Contact Number:	
Learner Email Address:	
Date Training Commenced:	

This Book Contains:

- Course Information.
- Review Questions.

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1.1 Introduction

These resources are based on the unit **RIIWH301E Conduct Safety and Health Investigations**.

You will learn how to:

- ◆ Determine the objectives and develop investigation plan.
- ◆ Gather information.
- ◆ Evaluate information.
- ◆ Identify course of action.
- ◆ Prepare and present investigation reports.



1.1.1 Why Do We Need Safety and Health Investigations?

Safety and health investigations are needed when an accident or incident has occurred that has either:

- 1 Caused damage to the environment.
- 2 Caused damage to property.
- 3 Caused injury to people.
- 4 Had the potential to cause injury or damage (near miss).



The aim of a safety and health investigation is to identify exactly what caused an accident and prompt you to put measures in place to prevent the incident happening again.

Every investigation should have the prevention of a repeat incident as one of the main goals. However, sometimes the causes of an incident are a combination of factors that would not have led to an accident by themselves.

The investigation should determine all the actions and how each individual action worked together to cause the incident.

Review Questions

1.

What is the aim of a safety and health investigation?



1.2 Work Health and Safety



All health and safety investigations need to follow the guidelines set out in workplace procedures and documentation.

These procedures and documentation are developed to meet different legislative requirements.

By following the procedures and documents, you can make sure your health and safety investigations (and any other work that you do) are compliant (this means it follows the rules to achieve the right outcome).

Every workplace has to follow laws and rules to keep everyone safe. There are 4 main types:

Laws	Explanation
Acts	These are laws that you have to follow.
Regulations	These explain what the law means.
Codes of Practice	These are instructions on how to follow the law, based on industry standards.
Australian Standards	These tell you what the minimum requirement is for a job, product or hazard.

Some states use WHS laws, and other states use OHS laws. They both talk about the same thing but use different words or names for people.

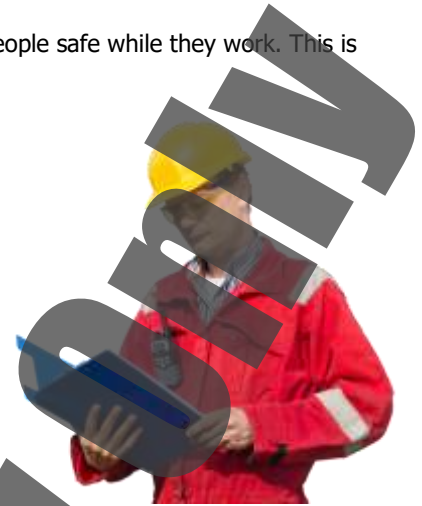
In line with the National model health and safety regulations this course will use the term Work Health and Safety (WHS). If you have any questions about safety rules, you should talk to your boss or supervisor.

WHS law says that all companies and workers need to keep themselves and other people safe while they work. This is called a duty of care.

To keep yourself and other workers safe you need to:

- ◆ Follow your instructions.
- ◆ Follow all workplace rules.
- ◆ Make sure all equipment is safe to use.
- ◆ Carry out your work safely.
- ◆ Report any problems.

If you think something is dangerous, stop work and report it as soon as possible.



1.2.1 Australian Standard 45001:2018



The current Australian Standard for WHS is **AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems - Requirements with Guidance for Use.**

The purpose of this standard is to prevent work-related injury and illness to works, and to provide safe and healthy workplaces.

As a Safety and Health investigator, your purpose is the same as that of the WHS regulations: to prevent further accident and injuries, ensuring a safe and healthy workplace.

Review Questions

2.	What are the four (4) main types of workplace laws and rules that keep everyone safe?	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

3.

What is the current Australian Standard for WHS?



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1.3 Identify Hazards

A **hazard** is a thing or situation with the potential to cause injury, harm or damage.

When you start checking for hazards, make sure you look everywhere. A good way to do this is to check:

- ◆ **Up high** above your head.
- ◆ All around you **at eye level**.
- ◆ **Down low** on the ground (and also think about what is under the ground).



Some hazards that you may find in your work area can include:



- ◆ Broken glass.
- ◆ Tripping hazards.
- ◆ Nails on the ground.
- ◆ Injured workers.
- ◆ Upset or traumatised workers.
- ◆ Fallen tree.
- ◆ Chemical spill.
- ◆ Broken tools/equipment/plant.

1.3.1 Risk Management

Through the process of the investigation you may be looking at parts of the risk management process to identify the cause of the incident or accident.

It is essential that you fully understand these processes so that you can assess areas that need improvement when recommending a course of action.

You also have a duty to assess risk as applicable to the investigation, e.g. is there broken glass evident on the worksite from the incident? Does anyone need first aid?



A **risk** is the chance of a hazard hurting you or somebody else or causing some damage.



Risk Management is the process of eliminating or controlling hazards to reduce the risks that people and equipment are exposed to at work.

The risk management process aims to:

- ◆ Identify the risks or hazards.
- ◆ Estimate the likelihood of an incident, situation or accident.
- ◆ Identify the consequences.
- ◆ Work out the level of the risk.
- ◆ Identify treatments to reduce the risk.
- ◆ Implement controls to manage hazards.

The best way to control hazards is to use the Hierarchy of Hazard Control. The hierarchy of hazard control is a range of options that can eliminate or reduce the risk of hazards.

This table shows the 6 different types of controls in order from best to worst:

Control	Explanation
1. Elimination	Completely remove the hazard. This is the best kind of hazard control.
2. Substitution	Swap a dangerous work method or situation for one that is less dangerous.
3. Isolation	Isolate or restrict access to the hazard.
4. Engineering Controls	Use equipment to lower the risk level.
5. Administrative Controls	Site rules and policies attempt to control a hazard.
6. Personal Protective Equipment	The least effective control. Use PPE while you carry out your work.

It is important to think about all of the options available when deciding on the best hazard controls. You may need to use more than one control measure to bring the risk level down to an acceptable level.

Check the situation after you have applied a control measure to see if more controls, or different controls, are needed to make the job safe.

If more controls are needed, make sure they are applied before you start or continue the work.



1.3.2 Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is the next stage of the risk management process and involves finding the risk level associated with a hazard, then working out what action you need to take.

As Risk Assessment is an essential step for risk management, it should be documented and may become evidence for your investigation.

A Risk Analysis helps you to work out the 'risk level'. You can work out the risk level by looking at two factors:

Factor	Consideration
Consequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What would be the outcome of the event occurring? ◆ How severe would the outcome be?
Likelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What is the chance of the event occurring? ◆ Has the event happened before? ◆ Is it likely to happen again?

Criteria for the unacceptability of the risk are determined by the organisation, with reference to relevant legislation, and are detailed in:

- ◆ Internal policy.
- ◆ Workplace goals and objectives.
- ◆ Regulations.
- ◆ Codes of practice for specific risks or hazards.



Different risk levels will require different responses for work to be allowed to begin or continue. The following table shows how different risk levels could be dealt with:

Risk Level	Action
Extreme	This is an unacceptable risk level. The task, process or activity must not proceed.
High	This is an unacceptable risk level.
Moderate	This is an unacceptable risk level.
Low	The proposed task or process needs to be managed by documented routine procedures, which must include application of the hierarchy of controls.

Review Questions

4.

What is a hazard?

5.

What is risk management?

6.

Which levels of risk are unacceptable?

1.4 Safety and Health Investigation



The main objective of a safety and health investigation is prevention.

A well-executed investigation will establish the series of events (risk management) that should have taken place and compares it to what actually took place, identifying which areas require change and improvement.

It is important to look for the cause of the incident, not someone to blame.

Systems and processes fail for a variety of reasons, not just human error.

1.4.1 Site Procedures for an Investigation

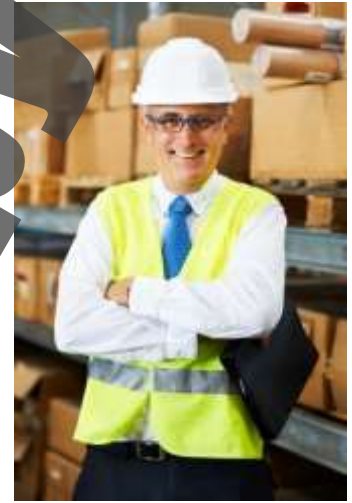
Before any investigation, you and your team should:

- ◆ Act as soon as possible after the incident.
- ◆ Visit the scene before physical evidence is disturbed.
- ◆ Avoid pre-judgement of the situation.
- ◆ Avoid removing anything from the scene.
- ◆ Ensure no one else has moved anything, unless asked to do so (in which case it should be documented).
- ◆ Take photographs and/or sketches to help you reconstruct the incident.

You need to make sure you and everybody in your team follows the safety rules and instructions when performing their work.

You should answer any questions that personnel have towards health and safety or direct them to the right person to speak to.

Your worksite should have policies and procedures in place to manage risks and the investigation process. Make sure everyone on the investigation team is able to locate these documents.



1.5 Scope of Investigation

The scope of the investigation is all of the things you are looking at that surround or contributed to the incident or accident happening. This could include:

Surrounding Factor	Explanation of Possible Impact
Policies, Procedures and Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ You will need to look at these to work out if there is a failure in the way safety systems and instructions control hazards and reduce risks.◆ This includes looking at the instructions for completing tasks and seeing if they provide enough guidance to personnel, or if they match the way tasks are actually completed (i.e. are they up to date, relevant and accurate?).
Environment, Location or Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ You will need to look at the physical location where the incident, accident or near miss occurred.◆ Were there other unplanned or unexpected factors that contributed to the incident occurring? Had all of the correct safety measures been taken to ensure the work environment was as safe as possible?
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The equipment relating to the incident will need to be investigated to see if there was a fault or misuse that contributed to the incident.◆ Was it the right equipment for the job? Was it being used properly? Was it faulty? Did it meet all safety requirements?
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ You will need to talk to everyone involved in the incident as well as identifying anybody who may have contributed to the incident without realising or being present at the time.

Determining the scope of an individual investigation will allow all personnel involved to plan and organise the requirements for the investigation.

This will include being able to plan the steps required, organising your time and that of the investigation team, and the resources available to you.

Determining the scope of an investigation could also include:

- ◆ Reading or preparing background information.
- ◆ Preparing or reading briefing notes.
- ◆ Reviewing legislation and regulations.
- ◆ Compiling documentation.
- ◆ Reviewing procedures and processes.
- ◆ Identifying industry standards, requirements and desirable outcomes.



Determining the scope of the investigation will also assist you to ensure that the pre- and post-incident timeframe is considered, and that this is consistent with legislative requirements and site standards.

1.5.1 Investigation Objectives

Once you have determined the scope of the investigation, you will need to determine the objectives of the investigation. To do this, you will need to see what information is available and identify any factors that may interrupt the investigation.

There are 5 main areas of information that must be analysed:

Area for Analysis	Factors to Look at
1. People	Management, the people in the workplace, sub-contractors, visitors, general public and others involved.
2. Environment	The work environment or the way that people interact with their work surroundings. Sometimes the ergonomics of the work area may be looked at.
3. Procedures	The way tasks are formulated and applied in the workplace. This can range from simple instructions through to complex directives.
4. Equipment	Any plant, machinery or tools that may be required in the workplace. Investigations may extend to the design of such equipment and the manufacture.
5. Organisation	The structural make-up of the organisation, how supervision is applied, the nature of operations and other factors.

As each workplace is different, there is no predefined set of objectives that can be applied to an investigation.

Possible objectives of the investigation could include checking or analysing:

- ◆ Policies and procedures.
- ◆ Work practices.
- ◆ Workplace culture.
- ◆ Staff training, qualifications and skills.
- ◆ The organisation of information.
- ◆ Communications, record keeping and reporting.
- ◆ Risk management processes.
- ◆ Project planning or scheduling.



You need to consider what has happened and plan out who you need to speak with and what you need to look at. As the investigation continues you may find that new information comes to light and further areas need to be investigated beyond your original plan.

