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Accidents at work? Find out what to do.

“Watch out!” - “Stop!” By the time these words ring out, it may be too late. The minutes following a work accident often blur as co-workers rush to an injured employee’s aid. For some, the sight of blood, disfigurement or agony becomes overwhelming and interferes with rational thinking. However, there are certain steps employers and employees can follow to remain calm and properly handle **any** work comp injury, both large and small.

During a crisis, many of us may experience slow reaction times, or even panic. And with Indiana ranking above the national average for non-fatal occupational illness and injuries([IN Review](#)), there are steps businesses can take to help improve employee reactions to work accidents(and even accidents in general) by practicing emergency techniques and preparations. This may be very beneficial for those industries who accounted for the highest injury rates - manufacturing, health and social assistance and state and local government. Businesses can help improve employee-reactions to accidents by practicing emergency techniques and preparations. Applying these steps may aid a fellow worker, customer or visitor who experiences a workplace accident.

In a blog published by an alliance of safety advocates from the Injury Board, [Injury Law Wikki](#) shares how to put an emergency plan together. First, employers should provide basic first aid kits and other emergency supplies, as well as training on how to use them. Just like your medicine cabinet at home, the first aid kit should contain an antibiotic ointment/spray, sterile gauze, adhesive bandages and other first aid material. Based on the company’s size, a percentage of employees should receive CPR certification and all employees should be made aware of these designated personnel. The prompt response by non-medical professionals can improve a victim’s outcome until medical personal arrive.

When responding to an injury, employees should take a second to review the situation and not move the injured person (unless necessary to avoid more harm) until medical professionals arrive. First aid should be applied when needed and basic first aid rules for common workplace injuries need to be remembered.

Basic First Aid Rules for Common Workplace Injuries

Nose Bleeds	Pinch nose and tilt head forward
Animal Bites	Wash the wound, identify animal and report the bite
Serious Fall	DO NOT move the victim. Call 9-1-1
Severe Wounds	Have the victim sit or lie down; apply direct pressure to stop bleeding. Call 9-1-1
Small Wounds	Wash the wound and apply dressing and bandages
Bruise	Apply cold pressure
Burns	1st and 2nd degree: Apply cold water, pat dry and cover with clean bandages. Do not break blisters. Call 9-1-1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 1st degree burn is red, sore, and covers a small area. • A 2nd degree burn is blistered and painful. • A 3rd degree burn causes the skin to be white or charred and there is a loss of skin layers. 	3rd degree: Do not put water on open wounds or remove burnt clothing. Cover burns lightly and call 9-1-1

Source: [Miami Department of Fire Rescue](#)

Once the medical aspect of tending to the injured worker is covered, the report (and the facts needing to be collected for the injury report) should be completed. This may include interviews of those witnessing the accident, evidence being recorded and roping off the area/equipment involved (if necessary).

[Lynch Ryan](#) recently republished a [National Council on Compensation Insurance's \(NCCI\)](#) report showing that injuries reported within two weeks are **18 percent more expensive** than those reported within one week and those between the 4th and 5th week almost **double in cost**. Simply put, late reporting gets progressively more expensive as time goes on. Putting a process in place for reporting accidents may also help to identify the cause(s) and prevent similar workplace injuries in the future.

You now may be thinking where or how can I start implementing these steps within my organization? Indiana employers can consider using the free services offered by the Indiana Department of Labor's OSHA consultation program, [INSafe](#), who provide on-site occupational safety and health consultation to guide employers, safety personnel, HR professionals (or any other company-assigned employees). Think your company may not be affected? Safety and health issues affect both large and small employers.

By integrating the above steps into any safety program or creating awareness of these steps by themselves, business owners of all sizes may be able to reduce work comp costs by properly documenting and handling an accident when it happens. It is far easier to establish a proper work comp case at the time of the accident, instead of trying to retrieve the details at a later point. Humans are forgetful creatures and as time pass valuable statements, eyewitness accounts and evidence may be lost. At the same time, humans are instinctive and rely on what they know. Teaching the correct emergency techniques and preparations will create the right reactions in an emergency. Business owners, safety personal, HR professionals, etc. cannot always be there to guide a crisis, so it is essential that all employees receive proper training for workplace safety.

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