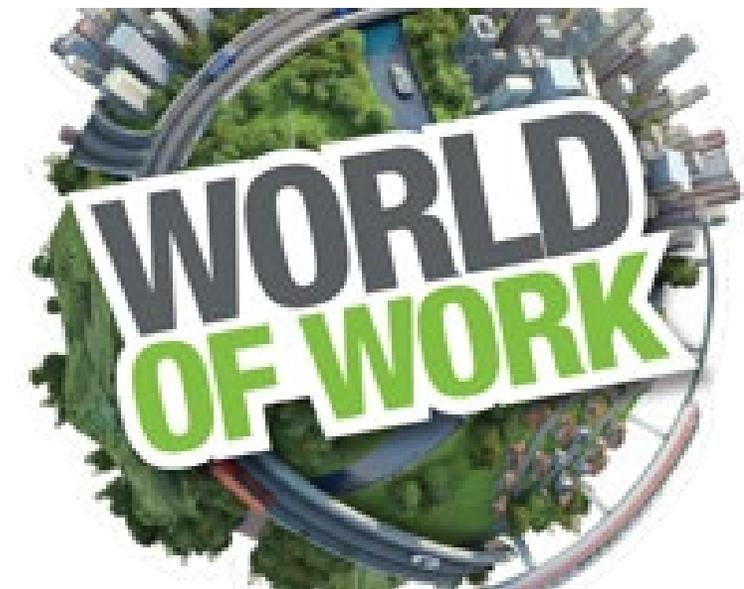




# **The Art and Science of Workplace Investigations**

- The Integral and (often) Overlooked Role of HR







**Emergency  
Phone is  
Out of Service**

Please do not have an  
emergency at this location





**There Is A Good  
Chance An Accident Brought  
You Into This World.  
Don't Let One Take You Out.**

**SAFETY FIRST**

**THINK SAFE  
WORK SAFE  
BE SAFE**

**It's easier to ask  
a dumb question**



**than it is to fix  
a dumb mistake.**

**KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR  
TRIPPING HAZARDS**



**BEFORE THEY FLOOR YOU**

The image features a dynamic, multi-colored spiral pattern that fills the entire frame. The colors transition through a spectrum including red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, and purple, creating a sense of movement and depth. In the center of this swirling pattern, the text "WELCOME TO HR" is displayed in a clean, white, serif font. The text is horizontally centered and stands out clearly against the busy, colorful background.

WELCOME TO HR

# Types of Workplace Investigations

## INCIDENT OR ACCIDENT

- Injury or harm to a person or property
- Near miss – potential harm that could have occurred but was narrowly avoided

## EMPLOYEE

- Policy, rules, law violation
- Employee complaints

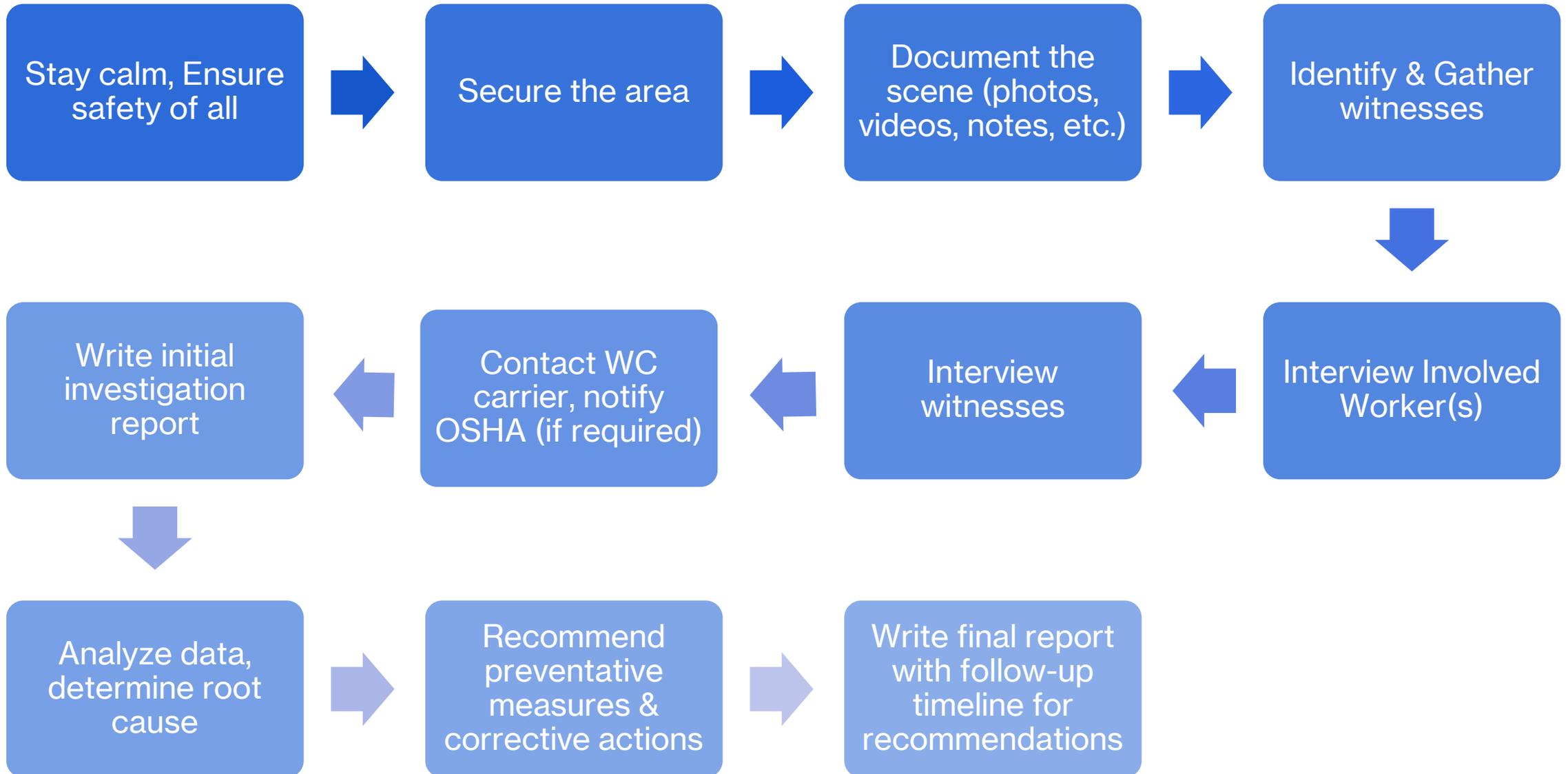


**Does every incident or employee complaint need to be investigated?**



# Incident or Accident Investigations

# Incident Investigation Process



# Incident Investigation Determinations & Considerations

- Who should conduct and participate in the investigation
- Incidents to be investigated
- Information to be collected
- Identification of causal factors (often referred to as root causes)
- Determination of corrective actions
- Tracking completion of corrective actions
  
- Remember to notify agencies and authorities if required within time allowance!



# ROOT CAUSE OF ACCIDENT

Symptoms of Problem



**DIRECT CAUSES**  
Immediate event / condition that caused accident

**CONTRIBUTING CAUSES**  
Event / condition that increased probability or severity of the accident

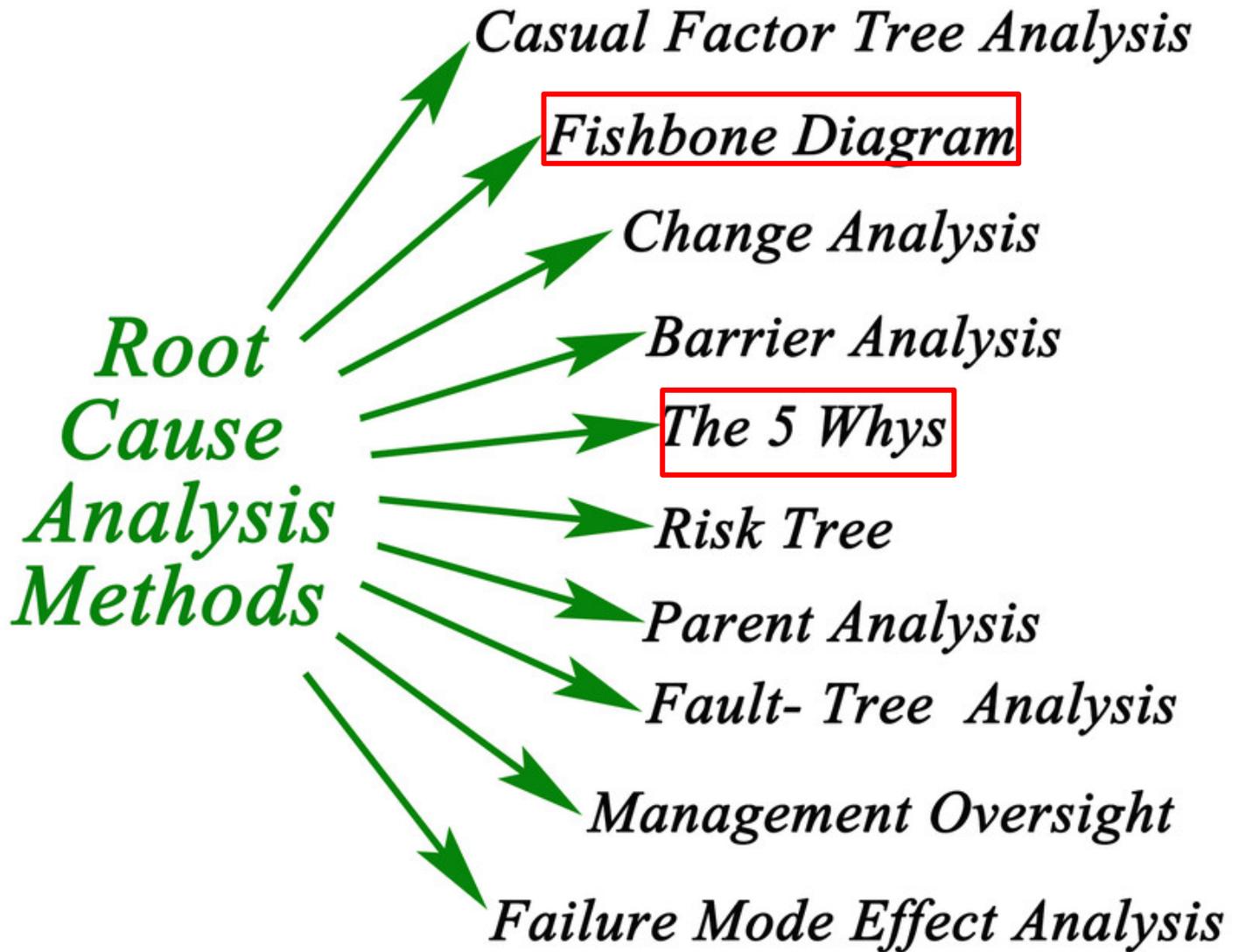


**BASIC/ROOT CAUSES**  
Fundamental cause that, if corrected, will prevent recurrence

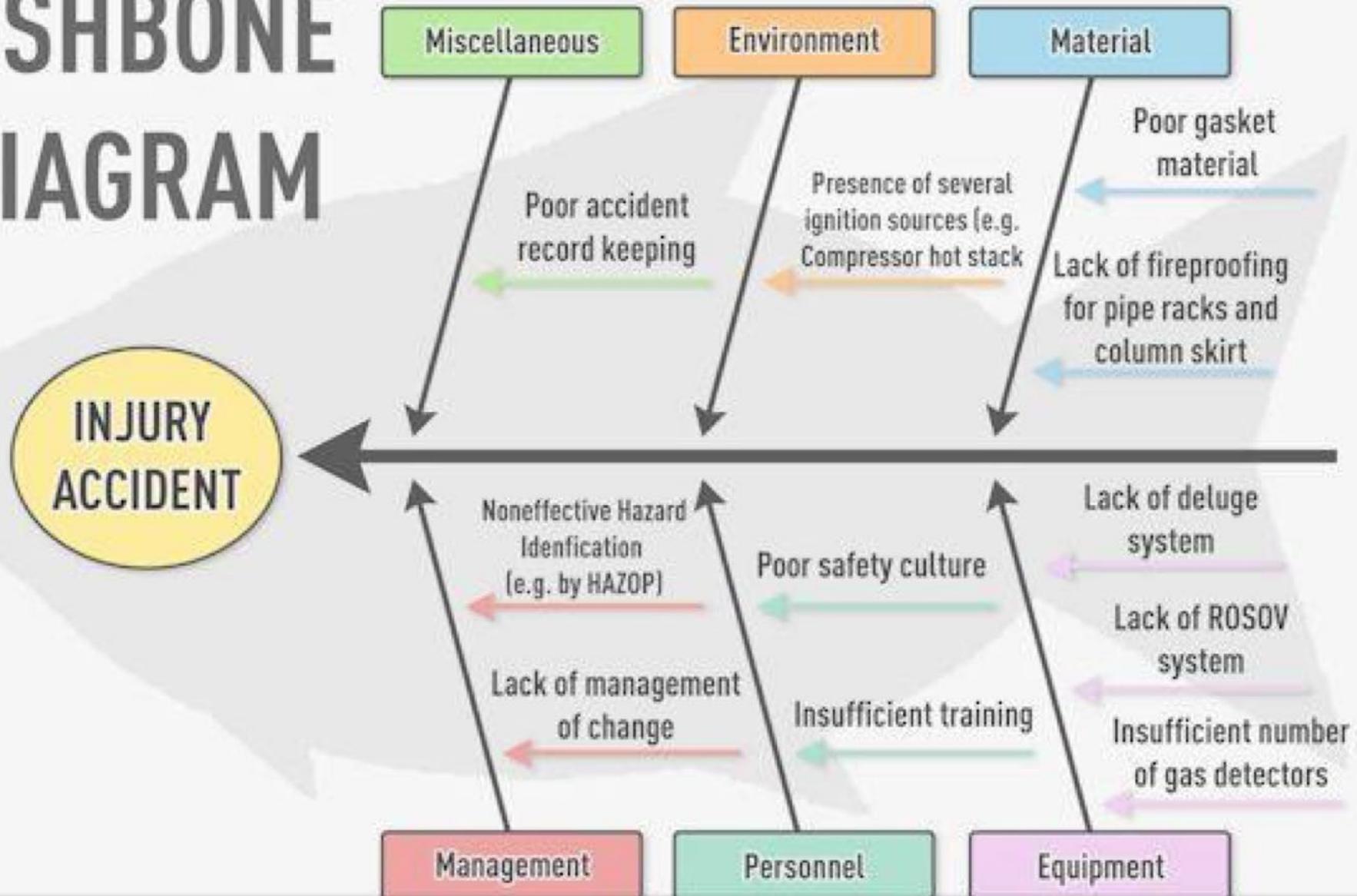
Underlying Cause

THE UNDERLYING CAUSES

# HOW CAN YOU DETERMINE ROOT CAUSE?



# FISHBONE DIAGRAM



```
graph TD; A[Define the problem] --> B[Why is it happening?]; B --> C[Why is that?]; C --> D[Why is that?]; D --> E[Why is that?]; E --> F[Why is that? - Root Cause];
```

Define the problem

Why is it happening?

Why is that?

Why is that?

Why is that?

Why is that?  
- Root Cause



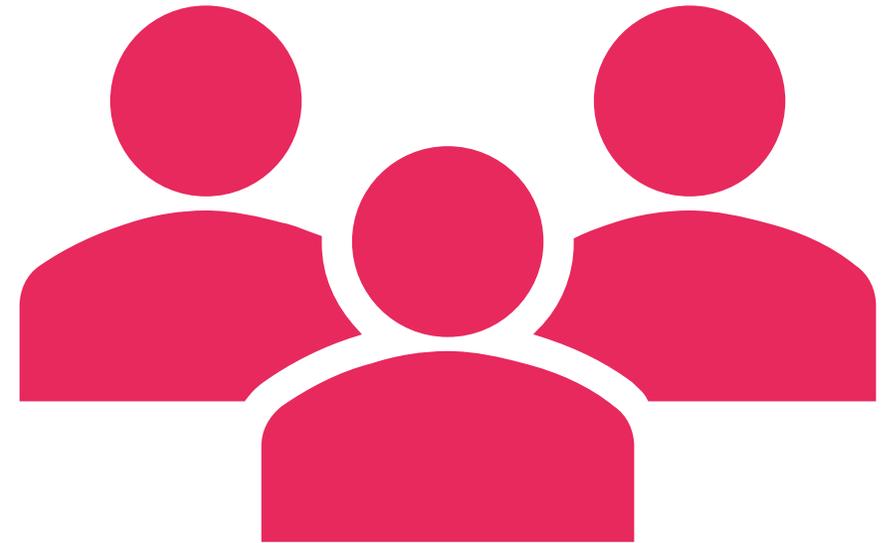
# Employee Investigations

# Employee Investigations



# Employee Investigation Determinations & Considerations

- Incidents to be investigated by HR
- Who should conduct the investigation (in-house? Outside counsel? Third party?)
- Information and interviews to be collected and in what order
- Identification of policies, rules, laws, and codes of conduct related
- Determination of credibility of witnesses
- What disciplinary actions (if any) need to be taken
- Additional training needed (if any)
- Documentation of all actions and inactions
- Follow-up and follow-through as required



# Investigation Process Similarities

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION



- ✓ Incident occurs, HR/Safety notified
- ✓ Ensure safety of all
- ✓ Document scene
- ✓ Interview witnesses & those directly involved
- ✓ Report to authorities & agencies as needed
- ✓ Document findings, determination why event occurred
- ✓ Provide recommendations & preventative measures with follow-up timeline
- ✓ Finalize documents for filing

## EMPLOYEE INVESTIGATION



- ✓ HR notified of event or series of events
- ✓ Ensure safety of all
- ✓ Interview complainant and witnesses
- ✓ Review all relevant documentation (policies, handbook, training, job descriptions, etc.)
- ✓ Discuss with counsel as needed
- ✓ Assess credibility, make determination as to why or what event(s) occurred
- ✓ Provide or implement next steps to resolution with follow-through
- ✓ Finalize documents for filing

# Costs & Impact to Business



125,058	154,568	95,054	124,500
125,487	56,845	97,511	125,000
124,000	110,000	99,011	154,000
105,450	150,000	99,216	95,000
86,502	35,000	101,090	154,200
	83,000	101,684	110,000
	45,000	101,962	89,000
		102,747	50,000
			68,700
			123,000

## DIRECT COSTS

- Investigation time
- Work disruption
- Disciplinary actions
- Legal expenses

## INDIRECT COSTS

- Loss of trust in the company
- Lost or reduced productivity
- Decreased morale
- Administrative time
- Employee replacement (if termed)
- Change management
- Training teams or replacements
- Future legal expenses
- Loss of reputation, negative publicity
- Damage to client relationships
- (Re)training supervisors & managers
- Impact to effected teams
- Higher insurance costs
- And more....

## DIRECT COSTS

- Injured employee's lost-time wages
- Claim management
- Medical expenses
- Disability settlement (if any)

## INDIRECT COSTS

- Overtime
- Lost or reduced productivity
- Decreased morale
- Administrative time
- Equipment downtime
- Clean-up and/or repair costs
- Training teams or replacements
- OSHA investigation or fines
- Loss of reputation, bad publicity
- Damage to client relationships
- Third-party legal claims
- Additional medical claims
- Higher insurance costs
- Impacts to DART & EMR
- And more....



# CSI:

THE EXPERIENCE<sup>®</sup>



**Think  
Safety  
First!**

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

- *Benjamin Franklin*





**THANK YOU!**

**The Art and Science of Workplace  
Investigations** - The Integral and (often) Overlooked Role of HR

*Presented by Betty-Jo Bowers & Jen Strobel, September 12, 2024 for PA SHRM*