Introduction: Conducting Serious Incident Investigations

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Incident Management

* Collection
* Classification
* Use of Data

To better protect people from harm, and the organization from liability.
Relationship to Investigations

An investigation is one tool available to the incident management function.

Other Tools?
* Root cause analysis
* Database development
Investigation

Systematic collection of facts for the purpose of describing and explaining what occurred.
Relevant Facts

Facts that have the potential to help describe and explain what occurred.
Forms of Evidence

- Testimonial
- Documentary
- Physical
- Demonstrative
Testimonial Evidence

What people:

• Communicate
• About their memories
• Of observations they made
Documentary Evidence

The manner in which organizations preserve testimonial evidence: e.g., written witness statements; attendance records; work schedules; medical records.
Physical Evidence

Things and the spatial relationship between and among things...themselves.
Demonstrative Evidence

The manner in which we preserve physical evidence: e.g., a photograph; diagram; x-ray.
Forms of Evidence (continued)

So what?

Who cares?

Honestly, who cares?
Forms of Evidence (continued)

We must **SYSTEMATICALLY** collect facts:
Rules for how we collect testimonial evidence, etc.
Questions
Investigatory Values

- Speed
- Thoroughness
- Objectivity
Speed

- Begin and continue without unnecessary delay.
- What would be a “necessary delay”?
Speed

Common problems:

- Inadequate assignment process
- Conflict with other work
Throughness

Collect all relevant facts & collect them properly.
Throughness

Common problems:

- Failure to interview individuals/residents
- Collect facts using improper methods
- Failure to require medical exam when no apparent injury
Objectivity

Avoid making a conclusion of fact before collecting and considering all evidence.
Objectivity

Common problems:

- Conflicts of interest
- Personal relationships
- Preconceived beliefs based on personal experience
Questions
Contact

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