

Reclamation Safety and Health Standards—2024 Edition

Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.22 Accident Investigation and Reporting

Applicability: Reclamation Employees, Facilities, and Operations. This section does not apply to contractors.

Section 1.22 Accident Investigation and Reporting

1. Scope

This section establishes requirements for accident investigation and reporting processes for all Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) facilities and worksites. This section does not establish requirements for accident investigation of events involving aircraft, boats, or vessels. The Department of the Interior (Department) investigates these events (see Departmental Manual, Series 27, Safety Management, Part 485, Safety and Occupational Health Program, Chapters 15, 16, 22). Section 3.4.4 of Reclamation’s National Aviation Management Plan specifically addresses investigation requirements for aviation mishaps.¹

2. General Requirements

Reclamation’s goal is to learn from accidents and incidents (i.e., near misses) to help prevent future occurrences. By standardizing accident investigation and reporting processes, Reclamation can improve the quality and distribution of information collected.

3. Responsibilities

a. Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO)

- Shall authorize and appoint a Serious Accident Investigation Team (SAIT) for any serious accidents, as defined in 485 DM 7 and outlined in paragraph 1.22.8.e, Reporting to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- Shall determine whether the consequences of an incident warrant a Serious Accident Investigation (SAI).

b. Reclamation Chief, Safety and Occupational Health

- Shall notify the DASHO of serious accidents.
- Shall ensure qualified personnel are available to establish a SAIT.
- Shall ensure serious accident abstracts and reports are prepared for distribution.
- Shall provide feedback to and coordinate with the Department’s Office of Occupational Safety and Health to ensure the Safety Management Information System (SMIS) meets Reclamation’s accident data needs.
- Shall provide senior and executive management information on accidents and incidents occurring throughout Reclamation.
- Shall verify the submission of required documentation for accidents or incidents per this section.

¹ <https://www.usbr.gov/recman/sle/NAMP.pdf>

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c. Regional Safety Managers

- Shall notify the regional director and the Reclamation Chief, Safety and Occupational Health Office, of any serious accident.
- Shall notify the regional director and the Reclamation Chief, Safety and Occupational Health Office, of any injury or illness resulting in inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye.
- Shall review all regional injuries and identify accident and incident trends.
- Shall verify maintenance of accident and incident records/logs.
- Shall provide technical support, as needed, to ensure all contractors working at Reclamation-owned facilities submit necessary documentation for accidents or incidents in the required time frame.
- Shall ensure regional safety professionals can access the elevated permission levels in SMIS.
- Shall ensure the completion of an Augmented Accident Investigation (AAI) for incidents with a high potential for a serious accident.
- Shall send a copy of the final AAI report and abstract to the Director, Mission Assurance and Protection Organization, and the Reclamation Chief, Safety and Occupational Health Office.

d. Area Office Managers

- Shall provide resources and technical support to complete local accident investigations (separate from AAI and SAI, which the regional and agency-level office complete, respectively).
- Shall review OSHA Form 300, Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses.
- Shall review and sign OSHA Form 300A, Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses.
- Shall post OSHA Form 300A by February 1, and until April 30, of each year. This form summarizes injuries from the previous year and must be posted in a conspicuous place where notices to employees are customarily posted.

e. Area Safety and Occupational Health Professionals

- Shall update and maintain the OSHA Form 300.

f. First-Line Supervisors

- Shall immediately notify the regional safety manager and local safety professionals of any serious accidents and/or injury or illness resulting in an inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye.
- Shall conduct and document an investigation as required in this section.
- Shall notify the local safety professional, as soon as possible, after every work-related accident or incident.

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- Shall report in the SMIS and provide all required information as soon as possible, but no more than six working days after learning of the accident or incident.
- Shall ensure employees receive medical treatment for occupational illness or injury.
- Shall conduct incident investigations and identify root causes prior to completing the entry in the SMIS.
- Shall follow the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) procedures in accordance with Reclamation Manual, Directives and Standards, HRM 02-02, Workers' Compensation (WC) Program.
- Shall share lessons learned with employees.

g. Employees

- Shall notify the supervisor or respective safety professional as soon as possible, but no more than four hours after any work-related serious accident and any work-related injury or illness resulting in an inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye.
- Shall notify the supervisor of every work-related accident or incident as soon as possible.
- May file compensation claims and/or property damage forms in accordance with HRM 02-02.

4. Training Requirements

a. Initial

Team leaders, chief investigators, and safety professionals on SAI or AAI teams must attend and graduate the Interagency Serious Accident Investigation Course. It is not a requirement for other team members to complete this course. Team leaders shall determine required training for team members.

b. Recordkeeping

Reclamation shall keep all training records in the Department of the Interior's official repository and manage them in accordance with the Information Management Handbook.

5. Hazard Identification, Assessment, and Safety Measures

Prior to beginning an investigation, accident investigation team leaders, in coordination with safety professionals on the investigation teams, must identify potential hazards arising from investigation activities and include hazard controls in the Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) to implement during the performance of the investigation. The JHA must identify hazard controls according to the hierarchy of controls, which prioritizes in order from most effective to least effective. The hierarchy of controls are as follows:

- elimination,
- substitution,

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- engineering controls,
- administrative controls, and
- personal protective equipment.

6. Hazardous Environmental Conditions (Weather/Other)

Accident investigation JHAs must account for the potential effects of inclement weather on investigation procedures (e.g., visiting outdoor accident sites). JHAs must also consider the hierarchy of controls and utilize the "elimination" control by delaying the accident investigation until weather conditions permit a safe investigation. If an investigation is performed with exposure to inclement weather (e.g., colder temperatures) include personal protective equipment (PPE) and procedures to address weather hazards.

7. Personal Protective Equipment

The investigation team leader, in coordination with the safety professional, shall review the JHA and determine PPE needed for all team members according to job-specific requirements. The team lead and safety professional shall provide and train investigation team members on the reason for PPE, and proper use, fit, and limitations of PPE and other required safety equipment in the JHA. See paragraph 1.22.6, Hazardous Environmental Conditions (Weather/Other), and Section 1.07, Personal Protective Equipment.

8. Safe Practices

a. Accident Reporting

As required by 485 DM 7, employees shall report every work-related accident and incident to their immediate supervisor and electronically file in the SMIS. Immediately after an accident, the supervisor shall notify the local safety professional. The supervisor will review and record job-related SMIS accident/incident reports, including first-aid cases, into SMIS within six working days following the date management was notified of the occurrence. File OWCP claims within 10 working days, or as required by OWCP regulations, after reporting in the SMIS. The area/local safety professional will maintain the OSHA's Form 300.

b. Accident Investigations

The first-line supervisor shall investigate every work-related accident or incident, conduct accident investigations to determine root causes and prevention methods to avoid future occurrences, and determine the personnel involved in investigations according to the severity of the accident. First-line supervisors will not use these investigations for disciplinary actions. If a Board of Survey requests information from an accident investigation, the first-line supervisor will only share factual information.

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c. Augmented Accident Investigations

An AAI is carried out at the regional, area, or local level at the discretion of the regional safety manager on behalf of the regional director. AAI reports and materials shall be more detailed than an accident investigation and should follow a similar format to SAI reports. AAI reports shall include findings, causes, and recommendations, and shall be entered in the SMIS. The regional safety manager shall provide completed AAI reports to the Reclamation Safety and Occupational Health Office for distribution and prevention purposes within 45 calendar days after the accident. The regional safety manager will send a copy of the final report to the Director, Mission Assurance and Protection Organization, and the Reclamation Chief, Safety and Occupational Health Office.

d. Serious Accident Investigation

An SAI is required when an employee action or condition results in:

- any employee fatalities that result from injuries or illness sustained during the performance of work duties,
- one or more non-employee fatality,
- the inpatient hospitalization of three or more persons,
- property damage (including site mitigation or cleanup) of 500,000 dollars or more, and/or
- consequences the DASHO determines warrant further investigation (e.g., one or two employees hospitalized due to severity of work-related injuries or illnesses, or a near miss incident).

The regional safety manager shall immediately report serious accidents to Reclamation's chief of safety and occupational health and OSHA per paragraph 1.22.8.e. The DASHO will authorize and appoint an SAI team, who will conduct the SAI per the requirements in 485 DM 7. SAI reports shall include findings, causes, and recommendations, and shall be entered in the SMIS. The SAI team lead must provide completed SAI reports to the Reclamation Safety and Occupational Health Office for distribution and prevention purposes within 45 calendar days after the accident. The SAI team lead will send a copy of the final report to the Director, Mission Assurance and Protection Organization.

e. Reporting to OSHA

In addition to Reclamation's accident reporting requirements, OSHA requires reports for:

- work-related fatalities within eight hours, and
- work-related inpatient hospitalizations, amputations, and losses of an eye within 24 hours.

Report accidents to OSHA in any of the following ways:

- call OSHA's free and confidential number at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742),

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- call the closest OSHA area office during normal business hours, and/or
- use OSHA's online form: <https://www.osha.gov/report.html>.

f. Public Injuries on Reclamation-Owned Land

When a member of the public is injured or dies on Reclamation-owned land, the field, area, or power office managers must complete a spot report and submit to the regional duty officer per Reclamation Manual Directives and Standards, SLE 08-03, Serious Incident Reporting and Duty Officer Program.

▲ RSHS Appendix A: Definitions

RSHS Appendix A ([Definitions](#)) is available to print at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/safety/rshs/index.html>.

▲ RSHS Appendix B: Additional References and Citations

RSHS Appendix B ([Additional References and Citations](#)) is available to print at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/safety/rshs/index.html>.