



Accident Reports Aid in Investigation

The causes of accidents should be determined in order to prevent future accidents. Causes are determined many times through simple investigations that bear out what actually happened. Reviewing accident reports by those involved in the accident is usually the first step in discovering causes. For some of those involved, however, communicating what happened can be a challenge, as shown below in the descriptions of some accidents. Reports should be reviewed with drivers to be sure they are factual and as descriptive as possible.

Here are some real life examples that are NOT:

- Coming home, I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have.
- I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way. A pedestrian hit me and went under my car.
- I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment.
- The accident occurred when I was attempting to bring my car out of a skid by steering it into the other vehicle.
- I saw her look at me twice; she appeared to be making very slow progress when we met on impact.
- I was thrown from my car as it left the road. I was later found in a ditch by some stray cows.
- The pedestrian had no idea which direction to go so I ran over him.
- I was unable to stop in time and my car crashed into the other vehicle. The driver and passengers then left immediately for a vacation with injuries.
- When I saw I could not avoid a collision, I stepped on the gas and then I crashed into the other car.

Definitions of Safety:

1. Freedom from hazard (Webster's Intercollegiate Dictionary)
2. Freedom from those conditions, which can cause injury/damage to personnel, equipment, or property (Anon)
3. The protection of men and equipment from the hazards that exceed the normal risks within the operational requirements of a healthy transportation community
4. Maintaining efficiently is the physical and mechanical well being of men and equipment to the degree acceptable with the operational requirements of a healthy transportation community
5. The elimination of preventable accidents
6. Confidence of mind and reliance on equipment that is sustained only by active and aggressive pursuit of all paths to maximum proficiency
7. The optimum degree of freedom from danger or hazard to life, health or property; or from the occurrence of undesired incidents or events in any element of the system's operations (Anon)
8. Action taken toward the prevention of loss in manpower, material and time during transportation activities
9. A specialized form of overall reliability, which involves actual or potential loss of the vehicle, and/or a high level of emotion
10. The professional way to do things

Thoughts on Safety

- Every man bears the unalterable responsibility for keeping out of harm's way. This he owes to himself, his family, his fellows and his job... that no man lives or works entirely alone. He is involved with all men, touched by their accomplishments, marked by their failures. If he fails the man beside him, he fails himself, and will share the burden of that loss. The true horror of an accident is the realization that a man has failed himself, and more, that his fellows have failed him.
- Accidents are conceived in improper attitudes, and born in moments of action without thought. They will cease to be only when the proper attitude is strong enough to precede the act; when the right attitude creates the awareness that controls the act.
- The prevention of accidents is an objective, which crosses all levels of rank, organization and procedure.
- Freedom from harm is not a privilege but a goal to be achieved and perpetuated day by day.
- The elimination of injury and pain through accidents is a moral obligation upon which the final measure of our performance directly depends.

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