

# Policy and Procedure 8-11

## Workplace Safety - Accident Reporting, Investigation and Prevention

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**Effective Date:** February 14, 2017

**Codes/Mandates:** [OSHA Standard 1960.29, Accident investigation](#)  
[Virginia Code § 40.1-51.1.D, Reporting Inpatient Hospitalizations of One or More Persons, Amputations or Loss of an Eye](#)

**References:** Memo 2001 – No. 10 Virginia Department of State Police, Interdepartmental Vehicle Accident Prevention and Safety Program pursuant to the provision of Section 52-4, of the Code of Virginia

**Forms:** 8.21 Employer’s Accident Report (EAR)  
8.22 Investigative Report of Accident  
8.23 Accident Analysis Matrix  
8.24 Tick Bite Log  
DGS-OFMS-VDOF Automobile Incident Report

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## PURPOSE

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Investigating a worksite incident — a fatality, injury, illness or close call — provides employers and workers the opportunity to identify hazards in their operations and shortcomings in their safety and health programs. Most importantly, it enables employers and workers to identify and implement the corrective actions necessary to prevent future incidents.

Addressing underlying or root causes is necessary to truly understand why an incident occurred; to develop truly effective corrective actions, and to minimize or eliminate serious consequences from similar future incidents.

## POLICY

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It is the intent of VDOF Policy and Procedure 8-11 to comply with OSHA Standard 1960.29, Accident Investigation. Pursuant to these policies, VDOF will systematically study accidents and near misses that happen to employees to determine causes and contributing factors and identify ways to reduce or eliminate them. Accidents and near misses will be investigated to a degree that is proportionate to their seriousness and as outlined in the procedures.

Investigations will maintain a fact-finding focus. The procedures outlined in VDOF Policy and Procedure 8-11 will provide the framework by which accidents are evaluated; follow-up controls and procedures are implemented, and proper hazard information is communicated to all affected workers. This process allows the agency to “learn from its experience” and provide valuable information and direction to employees in an effort to prevent future similar occurrences.

## DEFINITIONS

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**“Accident”** is an unplanned event that results in personal injury or in property damage; unfortunate events brought about unintentionally.

**“Agency”** and **“VDOF”** means the Virginia Department of Forestry.

**“Belonging to the Commonwealth”** means owned, rented or leased by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**“Catastrophic accident”** is an accident resulting in the in-patient hospitalization of three (3) or more persons.

**“Commonwealth”** means the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**“Dangerous occurrence”** is a very serious type of ‘near-miss’ (e.g., such as a scaffold collapsing; an explosion; fire, chemical or biological spillage or release; electrical faults; fracture of an abrasive wheel; etc.).

**“Direct cause”** is the “thing” that actually comes into contact with a person or piece of equipment and causes injury or damage.

**“DRM”** means the Division of Risk Management.

**“EAR”** means Employer’s Accident Report (i.e. Form 8.21).

**“First-Aid treatment”** means a one-time treatment and subsequent observation of minor scratches, cuts, burns, splinters, etc., which do not ordinarily require medical care.

**“Incident”** or **“Near-miss”** means any event, which could have led to personal injury or property damage but, for whatever reason, did not. If you or someone you work with says, “wow, that was a close call,” you are referring to an incident. In the accident investigation world, incidents are also referred to as near-misses.

**“Incident-based [motor vehicle] accident”** means an accident resulting from natural forces, from acts by others than human, from a deliberate act, from a non-perceivable object or while the vehicle is properly parked.

**“Indirect Causes (or contributory causes)”** are unsafe acts and/or conditions that combine to cause an accident. They are typically traceable to poor management policies and decisions or to environmental factors, which are known as basic or root causes.

**“Lost workdays”** means the number of workdays beyond the day of injury, illness or disease that an employee would have worked but could not because of the occupational injury, illness or disease. The day of injury is not counted as a lost workday. The number of days lost includes all workdays (consecutive or not) on which, because of the injury, illness or disease, the employee was normally scheduled to work but could not work a complete workday or shift.

**“Major injury”** means an injury that is associated with severe or life-threatening circumstances and is usually associated with in-patient hospitalization.

**“Medical treatment”** means a treatment administered by a physician or by registered professional medical personnel under the standing orders of a physician.

**“Minor accident”** means an accident resulting in personal injury that requires little or no treatment and/or inexpensive property damage.

**“Minor injury”** means an injury that normally requires only first-aid treatment, not medical care (e.g., minor scratches, cuts, burns, splinters, bruises, etc.).

**“Motor vehicle”** means any mechanically- or electrically-powered, state-owned, leased or rented vehicle designed to be operated principally on a roadway for the transportation of property and/or passengers.

**“Near-miss”** means an unplanned, uncontrolled event or dangerous occurrence, which did not result in (but under different circumstances could have resulted in) a serious accident (i.e., serious personal injury or significant property damage). For purposes of this document, minor-injury accidents (those that are not typically reported) that could have resulted in more serious injury, but for some reason did not, will be considered reportable near-misses. Near-misses are some of the most important items to investigate in an accident prevention program.

**“Non-preventable [motor-vehicle] accident”** are accidents where the operator of the state-owned vehicle did not directly or indirectly contribute to the crash.

**“Occupational injury”** means the harm a person suffers as a result of an accident or exposure situation in the workplace. The injury is identifiable as to time and place of occurrence, and member or function of body affected, and is caused by a specific event or incident or series of events or incidents, within a single day or work shift.

**“Occupational illness or disease”** means an illness, or development of symptoms, caused by exposure to a particular agent/activity in the workplace (e.g., hepatitis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Lyme disease, etc.).

**“Preventable [motor-vehicle] Accident”** means an accident that the operator of a state-owned vehicle is directly or indirectly responsible for.

**“Private-party vehicle”** means a non-state-owned motor vehicle.

**“Serious accident”** means an accident resulting in a fatality or in temporary to permanent lost work time and/or significant property damage

**“Serious injury”** means an injury that requires medical treatment but is not considered life-threatening (e.g., sprains, broken bones, lacerations, etc.), typically associated with out-patient or emergency services but could include some in-patient hospitalization.

**“Special-purpose vehicle”** means any mechanically- or electrically-powered vehicle other than a licensed motor vehicle that is typically used for special tasks and not on roadways (i.e., agricultural, construction, materials handling, aircraft, ATVs, groundskeeping, etc.).

**“Unsafe acts”** are things people do, or don’t do, that indirectly contribute to an accident (e.g., horseplay, taking shortcuts from established processes or procedures, using damaged equipment, distracting others, not using proper personal protective equipment, etc.).

**“Unsafe conditions”** are things in and about our surroundings, as well as an employee’s physical condition or mental state of mind, which inherently increase our risk of injury or illness (e.g., unguarded machinery, broken tools, slippery floors, improperly fitted computer workstations, inclement weather, poor lighting, uneven or steep terrain, fatigue, sleepiness, etc.).

**“VSP”** stands for Virginia State Police.

## PROCEDURES

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### Responsible Parties

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#### Agency Safety Officer

- ◆ Planning, developing and overseeing the implementation of the overall accident reporting and investigation system
- ◆ Developing forms, policy and procedures
- ◆ Implementing training
- ◆ Reviewing of accident reports and trends
- ◆ Performing periodic program evaluations
- ◆ Review the results of investigations
- ◆ Communicate safety messages

#### Supervisors and Managers

- ◆ Enforce the program
- ◆ Ensure successful implementation of safety committees and their duties
- ◆ Determine actions that will take place as the result of accidents
- ◆ Supervisors are the first people to contact when an accident occurs
  - Ensure proper information flow
  - Initiate and/or conduct investigations
  - Complete or ensure completion of necessary paperwork

#### Equipment and Fleet Manager

- ◆ Maintains a record of vehicular accidents involving VDOF employees, which includes accident classifications, Virginia Department of State Police (DSP) reports, Form SP-209 and FR-300 and Automobile Incident Reports
- ◆ Prepares and forwards an annual report on the operation of VDOF-owned vehicles to the VSP reflecting the total number of crashes, including a breakdown of those crashes into classifications

## Human Resources Benefits Specialist

- ◆ Compile injury accident data
- ◆ Submit worker's compensation and annual OSHA reports

## Safety Committee Members

- ◆ Investigate accidents
- ◆ Review accident reports
- ◆ Classify vehicular accidents
- ◆ Communicate safety messages based on accident causes and trends
- ◆ Negotiate remedial actions
- ◆ Track and follow-up on compliance with implementation of preventive actions

## Employees

- ◆ Follow protocol for reporting accidents
- ◆ Participate in the investigation process as needed
- ◆ Share insight about job hazards and ways to prevent accidents

## Basic Responsibilities in All Accidents

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- ◆ Employees should provide medical care for injured persons to the best of their ability; summon emergency medical assistance for serious injuries by calling 911; move injured persons out of harm's way if necessary to prevent further injury, and provide information to medical personnel.
- ◆ Employees will secure the scene and collect information as needed. This involves physically keeping people (on-lookers, media, co-workers, etc.) away from the accident site to protect evidence and provide time to gather any necessary information. In minor incidents, this is likely to be minimal and include a simple exchange of information between parties and perhaps a few pictures. In a serious incident it could mean flagging off the area and awaiting the arrival of a state investigator.
- ◆ Employees will notify appropriate authorities when an incident occurs. The immediate supervisor is the first point of contact. If he/she cannot be reached, the affected employee will continue up the chain of command until successfully contacting someone in authority. The Virginia Department of State Police, on the other hand, is usually notified first in the event of a vehicle accident. In addition to initial verbal notifications, various reports are also used as a means of providing notification and documentation to appropriate authorities. Employees should become familiar with reporting protocols for different types of accidents {see Reporting and Investigating Motor Vehicle Accidents}.
- ◆ Employees must ensure that the original incident is managed appropriately even if another incident occurs simultaneously. After ensuring that any injured person is out of harm's way, the employee will continue to address the ongoing situation until relief is approved.

## Reporting and Investigating Motor Vehicle Accidents

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- ◆ Whenever an accident occurs involving a state-owned or leased motor vehicle (regardless of the extent of damage and the location of the accident), and while the vehicle is at the scene of the accident, the operator of the vehicle will immediately report the accident to the Virginia Department of State Police (VSP), except if:
  - The accident occurs in another state or the District of Columbia.

- Report it to the state police, highway patrol or local police department having jurisdiction. An officer is summoned to the scene, conducts an investigation and completes their state crash form. No VDOF internal investigation is required.
- The accident occurs on the grounds of a Virginia state college, university or community college.
  - Report it to the campus police department. The investigating officer completes the State Vehicle Crash Form and forwards it to the State Police. If there is no campus police department, report the accident to the VSP. No further VDOF internal investigation is required.
- The accident occurs on property under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Capital Police.
  - Report it to the Capital Police. The officer completes the State Vehicle Crash Form. No further VDOF internal investigation is required.
- The accident involves a pool vehicle.
  - Report it to the Department of General Services (DGS) Vehicle Management Control Center, at 866-857-6866. DGS will summon the appropriate police department and may also assist with emergency roadside assistance.
- The accident meets all the requirements of a location-exempt accident {see Location-Exempt Accidents}.
- ◆ When VSP responds to an accident, an officer will conduct an investigation and complete a State Vehicle Crash Report SP-209 and/or FR-300 (used for accidents involving injury and > \$1500 in damages). No further VDOF internal investigation is required. However, before leaving the scene, the employee should obtain information from the investigating officer as to how to obtain copies of those reports (they will usually be available at the local State Police field office within 10 days). The operator is responsible for making sure that copies are forwarded, within 10 days, to the VDOF equipment and fleet manager, supervisor, unit safety officer, agency safety officer and the Division of Risk Management (if there is potential for a claim from another party). Fax DRM at 1-804-371-2442 or email to DRMCclaims@trs.virginia.gov.
- ◆ If the employee involved in the accident is injured and is incapacitated, his/her supervisor will secure and forward the police reports.
- ◆ If the VSP declines to investigate a motor vehicle accident, the operator shall document, on the Automobile Incident Report, the name and position of the VSP employee contacted and the reason for decline. The operator should also make an attempt to obtain a written statement from the VSP stating the reason for decline, particularly if the accident involves a private party.
- ◆ If an accident involves a private-party vehicle, the drivers should exchange contact, vehicle and insurance information. Employees should provide state information, not personal information. Obtain name, address and phone number of all people involved in the accident; obtain the names, addresses and phone numbers of witnesses; note all property damage (take photos if possible) and inform the other party that claims **must be directed in writing to DRM**. They will need to submit a claim along with support documentation. The information should be sent to: Department of Treasury, Division of Risk Management, P.O. Box 18790, Richmond, VA 23218-1879.
- ◆ An employee involved in an accident will inform his/her supervisor of the accident via phone, e-mail or in person as soon as possible and within the same day. The supervisor will immediately inform the VDOF equipment and fleet manager.
- ◆ Employees involved in a motor vehicle accident will complete and submit an Automobile Incident Report within 24 hours.
  - For accidents resulting in damage only to VDOF vehicle and/or property (regardless of the extent of the damage), the driver completes an Automobile Incident Report form (including pictures of the damage) within 24 hours and ensures that it is submitted to the supervisor, VDOF equipment and fleet manager, unit safety officer and agency safety officer. If the operator is injured and is incapacitated, the operator's supervisor is responsible for completing and forwarding the Automobile Incident Report within 24 hours.
  - For accidents involving injuries or damage to non-VDOF vehicles or property, the driver completes an Automobile Incident Report form within 24 hours and ensures that it is submitted to the supervisor, VDOF equipment and fleet manager, unit safety officer, agency safety officer and the Division of Risk Management

at [DRMClaims@trs.virginia.gov](mailto:DRMClaims@trs.virginia.gov). If the operator is injured and is incapacitated, the operator's supervisor is responsible for completing and forwarding the Automobile Incident Report within 24 hours.

- ◆ The supervisor will contact the equipment and fleet manager to discuss repair procedures.

## Reporting Location-Exempt Motor Vehicle Accidents

Virginia State Police do not need to be summoned to the scene of an accident involving a VDOF-owned vehicle if ALL of the following are satisfied:

- ◆ The accident occurs off of state-owned or maintained highways and on property not open to normal, public vehicular traffic (e.g., private drives, public parking lots, farm roads, logging roads, logging decks, etc.).
- ◆ The location is not accessible to the state trooper. It must be difficult, if not impossible, for a state trooper to reach the scene of the crash in his/her assigned vehicle without the possibility of damage to the vehicle. If a trooper can drive to, or close to, the scene of the accident, the location exception does not apply and the VSP shall be contacted and given first right of refusal to investigate. If VSP declines to take a report, the operator shall obtain a written statement from them to include with the Automobile Incident Report.
- ◆ No personal injury is involved.
- ◆ No other vehicle is involved.
- ◆ No damage occurred to property.
- ◆ The state-owned vehicle received only minor damage and can be safely driven away from the scene of the accident back to the employee's office.

The driver will inform his/her supervisor of the accident as soon possible and submit an Automobile Incident Report form within 24 hours to the VDOF equipment and fleet manager, supervisor, unit safety officer and agency safety officer.

Upon notification of the accident, the supervisor will determine the need for an internal investigation and initiate one if he/she determines it as prudent. If an investigation is not called for, a justification must be provided to the agency safety officer within three working days. If an investigation is called for, a Form 8.22 Investigative Report of Accident will be completed within 30 working days. Copies will be provided to the supervisor, unit safety officer, agency safety officer and the equipment and fleet manager. The budget manager, equipment and fleet manager, chief of administration or agency safety officer may also initiate investigations.

The supervisor will contact the equipment and fleet manager to discuss repair procedures.

## Reporting and Investigating Special-Purpose Vehicle Accidents

- ◆ Employees are responsible for the care of property assigned to them as well as other property that they use while on the job. This includes any special purposes vehicles.
- ◆ All accidents involving special purpose vehicles belonging to the Commonwealth must be reported.
  - **Accidents resulting in a significant amount of damage, or in a near-miss, must be reported immediately** (by phone while on the scene if possible) to the employee's supervisor, and as soon as possible for minor damage. If injuries occur as a result of the accident, also follow procedures for the appropriate type of injury.
  - **Accidents resulting in minor damage must be reported as soon as possible** to the employee's supervisor. If injuries occur as a result of the accident, also follow procedures for the appropriate type of injury.
  - The supervisor, without delay, notifies the VDOF equipment and fleet manager.
  - If the equipment is federal excess property, the supervisor informs the VDOF Federal Excess Property Program coordinator.
- ◆ The operator involved in the accident completes a Vehicle Incident Report form and submits it to the VDOF equipment and fleet manager within 24 hours with copies distributed to the supervisor and the unit and agency safety officers. Not all information asked for on this form is going to be relevant to special purpose vehicle

accidents since it is designed for motor vehicle accidents. However, the operator should provide all relevant information and support documentation including:

- Date, time and location of the accident
  - Type of vehicle involved
  - Person or persons involved
  - Description of damage to the vehicle (provide pictures if possible)
  - Names of witnesses
  - Injuries that were sustained
  - Thorough account of the events and conditions leading up to the accident (description of how the accident happened)
- ◆ Upon notification of an accident, the supervisor will determine the need for an internal investigation and initiate one if he/she determines it as prudent. If an investigation is not called for, a justification must be provided to the agency safety officer within three working days. If an investigation is called for, a Form 8.22 Investigative Report of Accident will be completed within 30 working days by an Accident Investigator. Copies will be provided to the supervisor, unit and agency safety officers and the VDOF Equipment and repair manager. Investigations may also be initiated by the budget manager, equipment and repair manager, agency safety officer, chief of administration, deputy state forester or state forester.
  - ◆ Vehicles involved in serious or near miss accidents should not be moved from their final resting spot (unless the situation necessitates it) until an accident investigator examines the scene. Involved parties should stay on the scene, if medically able, in order to assist in the investigation. If an investigator cannot be deployed at once, the scene should be secured to the extent possible.
  - ◆ Minor accidents may be cleared after an adequate amount of pictures are taken and the scene is diagrammed to help with an investigation.

## Review Process for Vehicle Accidents

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### Review of Crashes Involving VDOF Vehicles

- ◆ VDOF safety committees will review all accidents involving VDOF-owned motor vehicles.
- ◆ A brief summary of each accident (excluding employee names) will be included in the Safety Committee minutes. It should also include the accident classification, reasons upon which the ruling was made and any preventative actions that the committee recommends.
- ◆ A list of all vehicle accidents (including employee names, dates of accidents and classifications) will be sent to the equipment and fleet manager following each safety committee meeting.
- ◆ The equipment and fleet manager reviews the rulings based on the information provided. If the ruling is questionable, he/she will make the final ruling. This information will be filed along with other documentation pertaining to the crash and used to compile year-end data for DSP.

### Review of Crashes Involving Department of General Services Pool Vehicles

- ◆ The State's Uniform Accident Prevention Committee reviews crashes involving pool vehicles operated by state employees and classifies them as preventable, not-preventable or incident.
- ◆ After a crash is reviewed and classified a letter is forwarded to the state forester, or his designated representative, setting forth the classification of the crash and the reasons upon which the committee based their decision.
- ◆ The letter will be routed to the employee's supervisor, who in turn will discuss the findings with the employee.



- ◆ The employee will sign the letter indicating that it was discussed and return a copy to the Uniform Accident Prevention Committee.

## Review of Accidents Involving Special-Purpose Vehicles

- ◆ VDOF safety committees will review all accidents involving special-purpose vehicles.
- ◆ The involved party's supervisor will provide the unit safety officer with relevant information regarding the employee's prior handling of VDOF property for inclusion in the review.
- ◆ The Safety Committee will review all documentation provided by the employee, supervisor and investigators.
- ◆ After a thorough review of the documentation, the Safety Committee will determine whether negligence contributed to the incident and will classify each accident as preventable, not preventable or incident. The equipment and fleet manager will be forwarded the ruling for final review and approval or denial.
- ◆ A brief summary of each accident (excluding employee names) will be included in the Safety Committee minutes. It should also include the accident classification, reasons upon which the ruling was made and any preventative actions that the committee recommends.

## Cost to Repair Vehicles

- ◆ In cases where the final ruling indicates causes of the crash due to either negligence or gross negligence on the part of the employee, in accordance with current policies and procedures and at the discretion of the state forester, deputy state forester, chief of administration and chief of operations, appropriate monetary charges may be levied against the employee as well as charges under the Standards of Conduct.
- ◆ If a vehicle accident involves damage to a VDOF-owned vehicle and VDOF is responsible for the damage, VDOF will bear the cost of repairs.
- ◆ In the event of a vehicle accident involving the use of a DGS pool vehicle, the Division of Fleet Management, in DGS will repair the damage to the vehicle. If there is no contributory negligence on the part of the operator, DGS will bear the cost of the repairs. If a VDOF employee is found at fault by the review committee, VDOF is responsible for the cost of the repairs.
- ◆ VDOF bears the cost of repairing or replacing special-purpose vehicles that are involved in an accident.

## Reporting and Investigating Injury Accidents

### Minor-Injury Accidents

- ◆ It is in the best interest of employees to report all accidents resulting in injury, even minor injuries, as they do on rare occasion worsen and require medical attention.
- ◆ A Form 8.21 Employer's Accident Report (EAR), will be used to report all injuries. The injured employee is responsible for providing a detailed account of the accident/injury to a supervisor or co-worker, who then completes the report and submits it, by fax or email, to the Human Resources Office within three days with copies distributed to the supervisor and the unit and agency safety officers. Supervisors will ensure that the report is submitted on time.

**\*Note, special procedure for reporting tick bites.** Tick bites are an exception to this reporting procedure. Employees should not report tick bites on an EAR. Instead, tick bites will be recorded using the Form 8.24 Tick Bite Log. These logs will be submitted annually on January 1st to the employee's supervisor for signature and filing. Logs will be kept on file by the supervisor for five years. It is suggested that the employee also keep copies. Should an employee need to seek medical attention for tick bite symptoms he/she should contact the Human Resources Office for further instructions.

- ◆ If the employee seeks medical attention for a minor injury, an approved worker's compensation panel physician must render such services. Once a panel physician has been chosen, the employee may not change doctors without approval from the Human Resources Benefits Analyst or Virginia Worker's Compensation Commission. Treatment by unauthorized physicians may not be covered by your claim.
- ◆ No investigation is necessary at the time of a minor injury accident unless the injury is considered a near-miss. If the injury is considered a near-miss, it must be reported and investigated as such. Should a condition from a minor injury worsen and require medical attention, a post investigation may be called for at that time.

## Serious-Injury Accidents

- ◆ Employees will report serious injuries to a supervisor immediately. If the injured party is not capable of notifying his/her supervisor, notification should come through whatever means is available including a co-worker, rescuer, emergency medical personnel, family, etc.
- ◆ Employees will seek medical services through an approved worker's compensation panel physician. If the injury is a true medical emergency, a hospital emergency room may be used for treatment.
- ◆ If follow-up care is necessary, the employee will need to use a panel physician. If one was not used initially for treatment, the employee must select one from the list. In many cases, a Managed Care Innovation nurse will be assigned to the case and assist the injured employee through the remainder of the recovery process.
- ◆ When obtaining medical services, employees should not give personal health insurance plan information. Provide the following worker's compensation insurance information to the attending physician: Managed Care Innovations, P.O. Box 1140, Richmond, VA 23208-1121 Phone: 804.649.2288
- ◆ When aiding a co-worker who has sustained a serious injury, remain with him/her until his/her care can be transferred to a family member.
- ◆ A Form 8.21 Employer's Accident Report (EAR), will be used to report the injury. The injured employee is responsible for providing a detailed account of the accident / injury to a supervisor or co-worker, who then completes the report and submits it, by fax or email, to the Human Resources Office within three days with copies distributed to the supervisor and the unit and agency safety officers. Supervisors will ensure that the report is submitted on time.
- ◆ Upon notification of the accident, the supervisor will, without delay, initiate an internal investigation.
  - A Form 8.22 Investigative Report of Accident, will be completed within 30 working days with copies provided to the supervisor and the unit and agency safety officers. If a full report cannot be completed within the timeframe, an interim report will be produced and submitted.
  - The Form 8.23 Accident Analysis Matrix should be used to collect information during accident investigation to assist with breaking down the accident and reviewing the contributing factors.

## Near-Miss Incidents

- ◆ All near-misses will be verbally reported to a supervisor as soon after the incident as possible.
- ◆ Upon notification of a near-miss, the supervisor will initiate an internal investigation. The investigation should determine if there are conditions in our workplaces that are hazardous. If the investigation uncovers something, attention will then focus on rectifying the problem before a like incident reoccurs.
  - A Form 8.22 Investigative Report of Accident, will be completed within 30 working days by an accident investigator. Copies will be provided to the supervisor, unit and agency safety officers and the VDOF equipment and repair manager. Investigations may also be initiated by the budget manager, equipment and repair manager, agency safety officer, chief of administration, deputy state forester or state forester.
  - The Form 8.23 Accident Analysis Matrix should be used to collect information during accident investigation to assist with breaking down the accident and reviewing the contributing factors.

## Major Injuries, Fatalities and Catastrophes

### *Dissemination of Information*

- ◆ Employees will:
  - Not compromise the injured party's privacy or the accident investigation.
  - Not release any information to the public or press.
  - Avoid using broadcast communication devices (such as radios) during the event that can be monitored. If using a radio do not use the name of the injured party and be as discrete as possible with other information being broadcast.
  - To the extent possible, not allow outside agencies to broadcast any information during the event.
- ◆ Information concerning the incident will be relayed to the media through the VDOF Public Information Office.
- ◆ The VDOF director of public Information will keep employees informed about details of the incident.

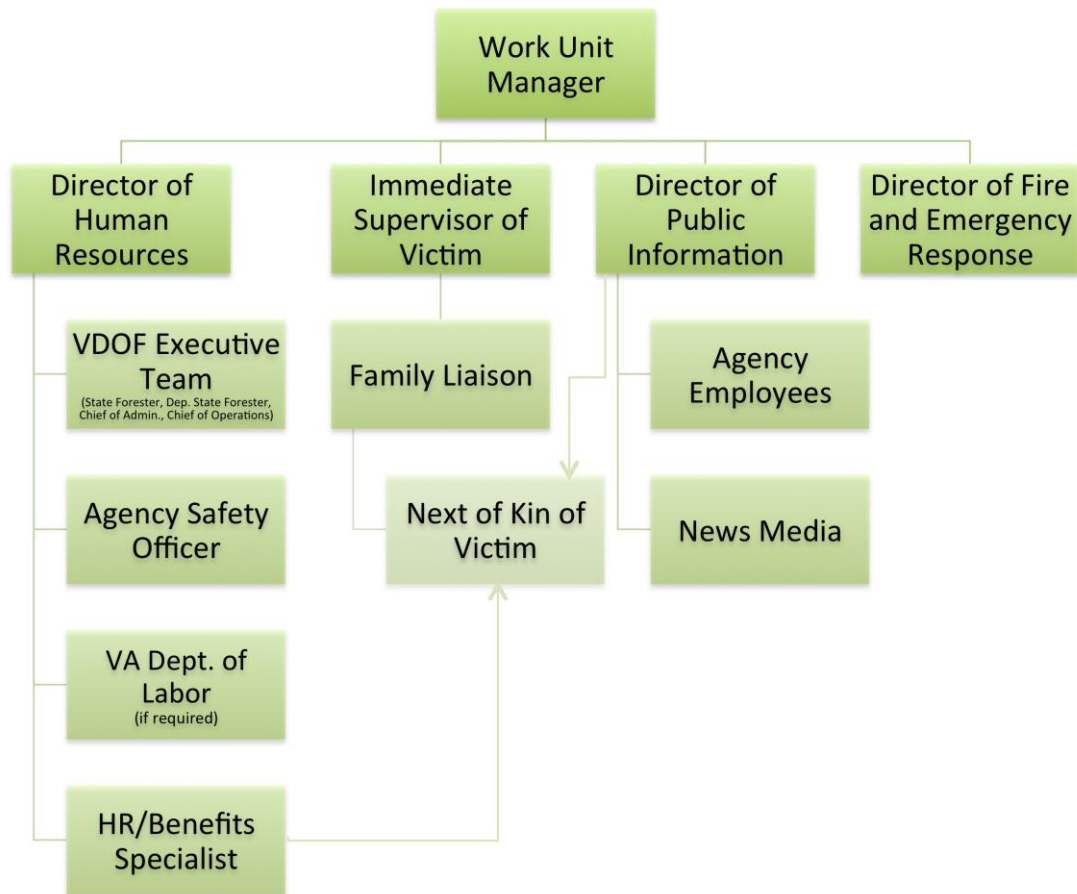
### *General Critical Incident Responsibilities*

- ◆ Care for injured persons to the best of their ability and move them out of harm's way if possible. In the event of a fatality, the corpse should remain undisturbed at the scene until an official investigator or a coroner releases it.
- ◆ Contact local emergency services and have the injured party transported to the nearest emergency medical facility. This facility does not need to be a part of the Worker's Compensation network.
- ◆ A Managed Care Innovation nurse will be assigned to the case to assist the injured employee through the remainder of his/her recovery process.
- ◆ Activate the VDOF notification network after care for the injured person has been handed over to EMS {See Notification Network}.
- ◆ Secure the scene to preserve evidence and assist investigators as needed upon arrival.
- ◆ Stay on the scene until released by a supervisor or other authority.

### *Notification Network*

During the time when a major medical situation is unfolding, the notification network will be activated immediately by the first VDOF person on the scene or the first VDOF person to receive the call. This basic network has been established so that in the event of a serious incident, things will transpire in a rational manner with various important tasks carried out expediently and in a manner that helps maintain as much confidentiality as possible for the injured employee and his or her family.

Notification should begin by contacting the injured employee's immediate supervisor, work unit manager, director of human resources or director of fire and emergency response. This person will then notify the person(s) in the appropriate position(s) (above and/or below) in the notification network to begin the information flow process.



### **Next of Kin Notification Process**

- ◆ The injured party's supervisor will coordinate the immediate notification of next of kin for fatalities and major injuries.
- ◆ The supervisor will select a colleague with whom the employee has an established rapport to be the family liaison. Supervisors should make sure the person chosen for the job is willing and emotionally able to step in.
- ◆ In the event of a fatality, all attempts will be made to notify the next of kin in person by a VDOF representative. The supervisor will deploy the family liaison to the home or office of the victim's next of kin immediately.
- ◆ If the victim has life-threatening injuries and has been transported from the scene, family notifications will be made in the most expedient manner available, including telephone. This provides family members with as much time as possible to reach the emergency medical facility to which the victim has been transported.
- ◆ In these cases, the initial notification will come from the victim's supervisor or the family liaison designated by the supervisor. The supervisor will also deploy the family liaison to the emergency facility to meet and support the family.
- ◆ If VDOF staff cannot be deployed immediately, the supervisor will request that local law enforcement contact the family; the family liaison will make contact as soon as possible thereafter to provide immediate support needs for the family.

- ◆ In the event of a fatality, the VDOF human resources benefits specialist will contact the next of kin within two working days from the time of the accident and offer information on survivor benefits, insurance, death benefits and the Employee Assistance Program.

### ***Family Liaison Responsibilities***

- ◆ Inform the injured party's next of kin of the incident and provide information regarding the occurrence (where, when and how the accident happened; what was the emergency response; news on what is currently happening on the scene of the accident, etc.).
- ◆ Suggest that next of kin inform other family members of the accident as soon as possible so that they don't hear it on the news first (and/or assist with this task).
- ◆ Inform the VDOF director of public information when family notification is complete so that public release of information may proceed.
- ◆ Alert the family when information will be released to the media.
- ◆ Stay with the family until they feel it is appropriate to leave.
- ◆ The family liaison will serve as the primary contact between the agency and the family. He/she will facilitate information requests, provide support to family members and seek out answers and assistance from specific administrative subject-matter experts as necessary.
- ◆ The liaison will make him/herself available to the family within 24 hours of the incident and throughout the initial grieving process.
- ◆ It is important for the liaison to anticipate questions and be prepared to answer them. Liaisons can anticipate questions regarding benefits, claims, visitation of the accident site, funeral arrangements and more.
- ◆ Liaisons should also be prepared to offer information that may help the family, such as how to access grief counseling through the Employee Assistance Program.
- ◆ The liaison should facilitate family attendance at agency-sponsored events (e.g., memorials, etc.).

### ***Reporting***

- ◆ Upon notification of the accident, the supervisor will complete the reporting documents for the injury or fatality.
  - A Form 8.22 Investigative Report of Accident will be used to report the injury or fatality. The employee's supervisor will complete and submit the form on behalf of the injured / deceased personnel by e-mail or fax to the Human Resources Office within three days of injury with copies distributed to the unit and agency safety officers.
  - The Form 8.23 Accident Analysis Matrix may be used to collect information during accident investigation to assist with breaking down the accident and reviewing the contributing factors.

### ***Investigating***

- ◆ In the event of a fatality or catastrophe, the director of human resources will immediately notify the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI). DOLI will immediately send out an investigator to the scene to conduct an investigation.
- ◆ The director of human resources, agency safety officer and appropriate work unit manager will coordinate an agency response team to meet DOLI investigator(s) at the scene to support non-fire investigations.
  - If the accident is the direct result of fire suppression activities, the VDOF fire and emergency response branch will coordinate the response team.
- ◆ The victim's supervisor or work unit manager will immediately launch an internal investigation.
  - If the accident is the direct result of fire suppression activities, the VDOF fire and emergency response branch will coordinate an investigative team and conduct the investigation. In addition to assigned fire

personnel, the investigative team will include the unit accident investigator, agency safety officer and subject matter experts as needed.

- A Form 8.22 Investigative Report of Accident will be completed within 30 working days with copies provided to the state forester. If a full report cannot be completed within the timeframe, an interim report will be produced and submitted.
- For non-fire-related accidents, the unit safety officer, unit accident investigator and agency safety officer will coordinate an investigative team and conduct the investigation. The investigative team will include the subject matter experts as needed.
- A Form 8.22 Investigative Report of Accident will be completed within 30 working days with copies provided to the state forester. If a full report cannot be completed within the timeframe, an interim report will be produced and submitted.

## Review Process for Injury Accidents

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### Minor- and Serious-Injury Accidents and Near-Miss Incidents

- ◆ VDOF safety committees will review all serious injury accidents, near-misses and any minor-injury accidents that could be considered a near-miss. The review will focus on understanding the causes (direct and indirect) of each accident. The review will not result in a classification related to negligence as with vehicle accidents.
- ◆ The committee will draft and implement an Accident Prevention Plan (APP) for accidents where preventative actions should be implemented to prevent future similar occurrences. A copy of the plan will be sent to the agency safety officer.
- ◆ A brief summary of each accident reviewed by the committee will be included in the safety committee minutes. This summary (no employee names included) should include a brief description of what happened, injuries and/or damage sustained, any causes that were identified, any recommended preventative actions and if an APP (Accident Prevention Plan) will be initiated.

### Major Injury and Fatality Accidents

- ◆ Workplace fatalities are investigated and reviewed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- ◆ In addition to the federal review, VDOF will conduct an internal review. The chief of administration or chief of operations will assemble a critical incident review team. He/she will serve as chair of the team.
- ◆ The incident review team will review all documentation relevant to the incident. The review team will focus on understanding the contributory and root causes of the accident; deciding on what remediation will take place to prevent future similar occurrences; delegation of responsibilities for carrying out remediation, and communicating the accident information and remedial actions to staff.
- ◆ The review of major injury accidents will not result in a classification relating to negligence unless such accident involves the operation of a VDOF-owned motor vehicle or special purpose vehicle.

### Communication of Accident Information

- ◆ An accident investigation program doesn't end with the review stage. Since the end result is to reduce future accidents, it is imperative to take the program to the next level – that of increasing employee awareness of the types of accidents that are occurring in the workplace and the reason for the occurrences. This can only be accomplished by communicating information. Therefore, the follow steps will be taken to help better inform employees about accidents:
  - Safety committee meeting minutes will include accident reviews.

- The annual Department of State Police Uniform Accident Prevention Program report will be made available to staff.
- Incident review teams will prepare summaries of the accidents reviewed and make them available to staff. The summaries will include a sequence of events that led up to the accident; causes of the accident (contributing and root), and actions they both recommend and require take place to help prevent any future similar occurrences.
- An annual summary report of employee injury accidents will be compiled by the agency safety officer and made available to staff.
- Safety committees will inform employees about accidents through such means as direct safety communiqués, safety bulletins, etc.
- Safety committees will inform staff when preventative actions have been undertaken and accomplished as assigned in preventative action plans.

## Accident Prevention Plans

- ◆ The final and most important step in the accident investigation process is to implement measures that remedy hazards associated with workplace accidents and injuries. This is accomplished by turning recommendations from accident investigations into actions for people to implement through accident prevention plans (APP).
- ◆ APPs will be implemented for all accidents that the committee and or agency safety officer, feels have needed courses of action.
- ◆ The committee in charge of reviewing an accident will draft the APP and follow through with the implementation of agreed upon actions.
- ◆ The APP will include the following:
  - Brief summary of accident
  - Names of the post-accident review panel
  - List of what the review panel acknowledges as causes (contributing and root) of the accident
  - List of preventative actions that should take place. This should take into account resource needs, such as manpower and money, and evolve around practicality and cost effectiveness when possible.
  - Names of individuals assigned to implement specific preventative actions. Depending on the scope of the situation, responsible parties can, and oftentimes do, involve people in multiple levels of administration as well as other divisions or work units. This is very often the case when such actions involve financial resources outside the scope of localized budgets and/or involves something that has state-wide implications.
- ◆ A copy of the APP will be forwarded to the agency safety officer, who shall assist the review committee in obtaining buy-in from parties assigned to implement preventative actions, negotiating for funding, administrative support, etc. and monitoring progress.

## AUTHORITY

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This policy and procedure is issued by the Virginia state forester.

## INTERPRETATION

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The director of human resources and agency safety officer are responsible for the interpretation of this policy and procedure.