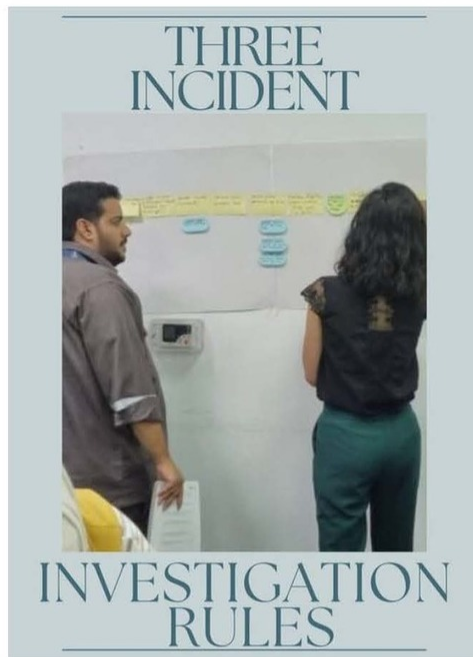




# **Weekly Safety Tip**

**3 Incident**

**Investigation Rules**



## Three Incident Investigation Rules

The three rules you should apply to every incident investigation are:

- 1. Don't Cause More Damage**
- 2. Don't Destroy Evidence**
- 3. Don't Make Up Your Mind Before You Start Investigating**

These seem fairly self-explanatory and straightforward rules, but these three incident investigation rules are not always followed . . .

Attribution: TapRoot, Mark Paradies

### Rule 1: Don't Cause More Damage

The first of the three rules of incident investigation is to not cause more damage. You don't want to cause another incident or further damage by investigating an incident . . .

Example #1: When investigating an accident where someone lost a finger, the investigator lost the finger during the re-creation of the accident. Certainly, this wasn't the intent of the investigation.

Example #2: Another likely negative outcome would be an investigator being exposed to hazardous chemicals at an accident scene when they are collecting evidence.

Therefore, investigators should consider hazards and the potential to cause damage before they start collecting evidence or performing interviews.

### Rule 2: Don't Destroy Evidence

Certainly, evidence should not be destroyed before your investigation is complete. Also, there may be times when evidence needs to be retained for criminal or civil legal proceedings . . .

Destroying evidence if there is a criminal investigation could lead to prosecution. This happened in the Deepwater Horizon post-accident EPA prosecution of BP. An engineer was prosecuted for deleting text messages even after he had turned over his phone to the FBI and it had been returned to him.

### Rule 3: Don't Make Up Your Mind Before You Start Investigating

Don't start an investigation by trying to prove that you know what happened. You should start your investigation with an open mind and let the evidence lead you to conclusions.

What would think of a superior who had already decided that he knew what caused an accident, and said: *"Now, all we need to do is prove it."*

The act of jumping to conclusions contaminates an investigation. Once you start to "prove" a hypothesis, your mind starts to look for evidence to prove your conclusion and disregards evidence that is counter to your hypothesis. This is called "Confirmation Bias." So, don't make up your mind – start with a blank slate.

# **Weekly Safety Share**



**March Safety Share on Ladders**



## Portable Ladder Safety



Falls from portable ladders (step, straight, combination and extension) are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries.

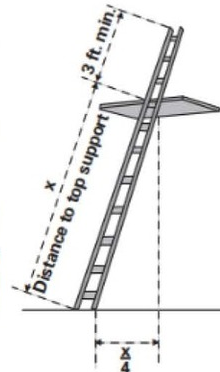
- Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards! – Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.



3-Point Contact

- Always maintain a 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing (see diagram).
  - Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes.
  - Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps or feet.
- Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
  - Do not use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.

- Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support (see diagram). Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.



- The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface (see diagram).
- A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.

For more information:

**OSHA** Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
U.S. Department of Labor  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

OSHA 3246-10/16

## The Numbers Speak for Themselves

2,000

ladder injuries every day

364

deaths caused by falls each year

6-10 ft.

The most common ladder falls happen between 6 and 10 feet off the ground

WHETHER YOU'RE USING A LADDER AT HOME OR AT WORK, THESE NUMBERS AFFECT YOU.

2 most common ladder accidents include:

1. Overreaching
2. Missing the last step when climbing down



Attribution: Infographic above is from the University of Kansas



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