

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**

Occupational Safety and Health

Part 240 Safety Program

Chapter 7 Accident Investigation and Reporting

240 FW 7

7.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter outlines the Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) policies and procedures for investigating and reporting accidents.

7.2 Who does this chapter apply to? This chapter applies to Service employees, volunteers, and any others who may be injured due to operations that we conduct. This chapter does not apply to aviation-related accidents. If an aviation-related accident occurs, report it in accordance with the field station's Aviation Mishap Response Plan. See Part 330 for aviation-related accident reporting requirements.

7.3 What are the authorities for this chapter?

A. Public Law 91-596, Sec 19, Federal Agency Safety Programs and Responsibilities.

B. Executive Order 12196, Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees.

C. 29 CFR 1960, Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters.

D. 485 DM 7.

7.4 What responsibilities are associated with serious accident investigations?

A. The Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations will:

(1) Ensure that serious accident investigations are conducted in accordance with 485 DM 7.

(2) Ensure that the Director, Departmental Designated Safety and Occupational Health Official, and the Office of Managing Risk and Public Safety are notified in a timely manner.

(3) Provide funding to support the travel and expenses of the Serious Accident Investigation Team or the trained investigator.

B. The Chief, Division of Safety and Health will:

(1) Notify the Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations of the occurrence of a serious accident.

(2) Recommend to the Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations if a Serious Accident Investigation Team or a trained investigator should conduct the investigation as well as the name(s) of potential investigators.

(3) Serve as the liaison between the Service and the Department of the Interior (Department) to ensure information and reports are provided as required in 485 DM 7.

(4) Disseminate lessons learned from the serious accident investigation to the Regional/CNO Safety Managers.

(5) Periodically review the Department's Safety Management Information System (SMIS) reports to determine accident trends. Utilize this information to determine relevant statistical information.

C. Regional Directors and Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office (CNO) will:

(1) Provide Regional/CNO employees to participate as members of a Serious Accident Investigation Team or as a trained investigator, if requested.

(2) Provide administrative or logistical support to the Serious Accident Investigation Team or trained investigator, if requested.

D. Regional/CNO Safety Managers will:

(1) Serve as a trained investigator or advisor to the Serious Accident Investigation Team, if requested.

(2) Disseminate lessons learned information within their Region/CNO.

(3) Review SMIS reports submitted by Regional/CNO personnel and edit, if necessary, before approving the reports for inclusion as an official record in SMIS. These reviews should occur at least every 30 days.

7.5 What definitions are useful in understanding the requirements of this chapter?

A. Accident An unplanned event involving Service employees, volunteers, contractors, emergency firefighters, the public, property, or the environment that results in an injury, illness, and/or property damage.

B. Incident. An unplanned event involving Service employees, volunteers, contractors, emergency firefighters, the public, property or the environment that could have resulted in an injury or illness but did not.

C. Serious Accident. An accident involving a death and/or three or more people hospitalized and/or \$250,000 or more in property loss, or circumstances that the Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations designates as warranting an indepth investigation.

7.6 Why do we investigate and report accidents? The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Department mandate the investigation and reporting of all accidents. The reason for investigating and reporting accidents is to determine the facts, root causes, and corrective measures needed to prevent recurrences. Accident reports are submitted electronically to the SMIS. This central collection of information allows for the analysis and identification of how the majority of the accidents occurred and why.

7.7 What are the reporting and investigation requirements?

A. Employees must immediately report to their supervisor every job-related accident as well as all incidents with serious potential. Accidents include:

(1) An injury, occupational illness, or death connected with the performance of work duties by employees, volunteers, or others working under Departmental jurisdiction.

(2) An injury or death to the public and/or property damage related to Departmental operations.

(3) A fire resulting in at least \$500 loss involving vehicles, motorized equipment, watercraft, structures, or contents of any property under Departmental control.

(4) Property damage or injury resulting from the operation of Departmental, General Services Administration (GSA), privately-owned, or commercially leased vehicles, or motorized equipment used for official business.

(5) Other property under Departmental control that is damaged by accident, whether or not it is to be repaired or replaced, and regardless of who caused the damage.

(6) Shelter deployments and entrapments as a result of wildland and prescribed fire(s)-related operations.

B. With the exception of serious accidents as defined in paragraph 7.5C, the immediate supervisor of the employee or property involved will conduct an investigation. The field station's Collateral Duty Safety Officer (CDSO) or Safety Committee may assist in the investigation to ensure that all relevant factors are identified. The immediate supervisor must report the accident or incident electronically to the [SMIS](#) within 6 working days. The SMIS is the official Departmental method for reporting accidents and incidents. Supervisors must complete the SMIS report in a thorough and objective manner.

C. For serious accidents, the supervisor must immediately notify his/her line management and the Regional/CNO Safety Office. The Regional/CNO Safety Office will contact the Division of Safety and Health and notify the appropriate [OSHA Area Office](#) within 8 hours. The Division of Safety

and Health will notify the Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations who will appoint either a Serious Accident Investigation Team or a trained investigator to conduct the investigation as outlined in paragraph 7.8.

D. In addition to the required SMIS report, a Boating Accident Report, U.S. Coast Guard Form 3865, will be completed whenever a boating accident involving watercraft owned or leased by the Service occurs in U.S. or territorial waters that results in the loss of life or disappearance from a boat, injury causing incapacitation in excess of 72 hours, or property damage in excess of \$2,000.

E. In addition to the required SMIS report, the motor vehicle operator will complete a Motor Vehicle Accident Report ([Standard Form SF-91](#)) and Statement of Witness ([SF-94](#)) (if applicable) for motor vehicle accidents involving General Services Administration vehicles as well as vehicles owned, leased or rented by the Service that involve public injury or damage. Submit these forms to the Regional/CNO Safety Office.

7.8 What if there is a serious accident?

A. Employees first at a serious accident scene should obtain emergency aid for the injured and protect others from injury and property from unnecessary damage, and, as soon as possible, notify line management and the Regional/CNO Safety Office. This initial notification should include the following information: facility name, location of the accident, time of the accident, number of fatalities or people hospitalized, contact person, phone number, and a brief description of the accident.

B. The manager in charge of the area where the accident occurred will:

(1) Ensure the accident site is secured. If needed, barricade or isolate the scene with ropes, barrier tape, cones, guards, etc. to warn people and/or restrict access to the area.

(2) Ensure the evidence is preserved. Record the location of evidence with videotape, photos, or sketches.

(3) Identify witnesses. Identify those who witnessed the event as well as anyone else who was in the accident area.

7.9 Who appoints members of a Serious Accident Investigation Team? After notification of a serious accident, the Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations will, within 24 hours, appoint a Serious Accident Investigation Team or a trained investigator. The investigator(s) should be on the scene within 48 hours. See paragraph 7.12 for information on wildland and prescribed fire-related serious accidents.

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7.10 Who serves on the Serious Accident Investigation Team? The team will include at least three members and an advisor based on their expertise related to the type of accident to be investigated. Each member should be from a Region/CNO other than the one experiencing the accident and without functional responsibility for the activity or persons involved. The team will consist of the following:

prepared for the next of kin. The servicing Human Resources Office will draft and submit the letter to the Division of Human Resources for forwarding through management channels for the Secretary's signature.

- A.** A senior manager from a similar operation serves as the Chairperson.
- B.** A line management official such as a project leader or supervisor of a similar operation.
- C.** A specialist in the type of work involved in the accident.
- D.** A safety and health professional trained in accident investigation techniques to serve as the advisor.

7.11 How is the investigation handled?

A. At the initial meeting of the Serious Accident Investigation Team, the Chairperson will brief the members on the following:

(1) Purpose and scope of the investigation and the process to be followed (formats, time constraints, interviews, etc.)

(2) Background and preliminary details of the accident.

(3) Status of the accident scene (security, existing hazards, personal protective equipment required, etc.)

B. Reports will be completed in accordance with the requirements outlined in 485 DM 7.

C. Information gathered during a serious accident investigation will not be used for punitive action.

7.12 What is the process for wildland and prescribed fire-related serious accidents? 485 DM 7, Appendix 2, outlines the investigation process for wildland and prescribed fire-related serious accidents. The Chief, Fire Management Branch, National Wildlife Refuge System, will determine the chief investigator and technical specialists members of the Serious Accident Investigation Team. The Chief, Fire Management Branch will provide these names to the Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations so that they may be appointed in writing.

7.13 Who notifies the accident victim's family?

A. The project leader or supervisor will ensure that initial contact is made with the injured employee's family.

B. When an employee receives a fatal injury, a letter for the signature of the Secretary of the Interior will be