

Death on the Job – Improving Workplace Safety after a Tragedy

There are many dangerous occupations where workers risk their lives every single day. Even workers in professions with seemingly low accident rates need to be aware of the potential issues that may lead to serious injuries or death. While most people are able to perform their daily tasks without any issues arising, accidents happen with little to no warning. If the accident results in injuries, the worker may have a valid workers' compensation claim. If the accident is more serious and result in death, there will be an extensive investigation into what exactly happened.

When a worker is killed on the job, employers will have to follow very specific instructions in compiling a report of the accident. Each death must be reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This agency will conduct an in-depth review to determine if the workplace is safe.

OSHA recently released new procedures that would go into place when the agency is investigating a death on the job. The major concern for officials is that when someone was killed on the job, families often were not informed of the progress of the ongoing investigation.

For families who lost loved ones, this proved quite frustrating. While OSHA conducted its inspection into the employer, families had to guess what really happened. Information was tough to come by. Now, OSHA is requiring its investigators to communicate with families prior to, during and after the investigation.

The investigation will be explained to the families so that

they understand what is happening at each stage. The OSHA investigator will be available to answer any questions the family members may have. After the final report on the accident has been filed, the family will have the opportunity to discuss the matter further with agency officials.

Source: OSHA Instruction "[Communicating OSHA Fatality Inspection Procedures to a Victim's Family](#)" April 17, 2012.