

Investigation Process

What triggers an investigation by the N.C. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Division?

- A worker's death.
- Hospitalization of an employee, an amputation or the loss of an eye.
- The department may also receive information of a fatality or catastrophe from media reports or referrals from other government agencies.

How is the NCDOL OSH Division notified?

- An employer must notify NCDOL within eight hours of any work-related fatality. In-patient hospitalizations of one or more employees, any work-related amputation, and any work-related loss of an eye must be reported within 24 hours.

What will the investigation focus on?

- The investigation will usually be limited to the events surrounding the accident unless observations at the site indicate a broader investigation is needed.

What will happen during the investigation?

- An OSH investigator will go to the accident site and collect physical evidence, including photographs.
- The investigator will interview employees, witnesses and management officials about the accident to determine its cause.
- Any violations of safety and health standards will be noted and citations will be issued.

How long will the investigation take?

- An investigation can take anywhere from a few weeks to six months, depending on the complexity of the accident.

When are investigation results disclosed?

- Citations and penalties, if issued, can be released to the public on the issuance date.
- Other contents of the file cannot be released until the case is closed or final order on citations is rendered.



NCDOL
N.C. Department of Labor
Cherie Berry, Commissioner

N.C. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Division
1101 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1101
www.nclabor.com
1-800-625-2267

The Investigation

OSH investigators will seek to determine several factors, including whether:

- Aisles were designated as travel paths for forklifts.
- Vehicles were operated at a safe speed.
- Only authorized personnel operated and maintained forklifts.
- Employees avoided standing under raised forks.
- Dockboard and trailer were secured while loading and unloading.
- Operators were trained in safe vehicle operation.
- Vehicles were parked with the forks lowered and brakes set.
- Carbon monoxide produced by forklifts was monitored.
- Operators wore seat belts while operating a forklift.

Standards: 29 CFR 1910.178, Powered Industrial Trucks
Industry Type: General Industry
Accident Type: Powered industrial truck accident
Statistical Data: Two of the 40 workplace fatalities NCDOL investigated from Oct. 1, 2013, through Sept. 30, 2014, involved forklifts.

What programs does the Department of Labor have in place to prevent forklift accidents?

Free training: Workshops, training and consultation in both English and Spanish.

Publications: An industry guide that discusses forklift operator training and the safe operation of powered industrial trucks.