

Investigation Format

What should the investigation tell you?

1. What happened
2. When it happened
3. Where it happened
4. Who it happened to.
5. How it happened.
6. Who or what caused it to happen.

Where do I start and Where do I Stop?

Start with what you know:

1. What reportedly happened.
2. Who was reportedly involved
3. Who else was reportedly there
4. Where did it reportedly occur

Incident Reports or statements

1. Does it tell you completely and exactly what happened
2. Does it tell you everyone who witnessed the incident
3. Does it tell you clearly and exactly where it happened

Get Organized

1. Secure Scene
2. Separate witnesses
3. Collect Evidence
4. Interview Witnesses/collect statements
5. Conduct follow-up interviews
6. Collect any additional evidence

STEP I Secure The Scene

1. Prevent removal of any evidence
2. Prevent contamination of evidence
3. Prevent rearrangement of objects of scene.

STEP II Separate The Witnesses

Important: The witnesses should not be allowed to discuss the investigation with each other before they give their statements.

- * This Prevents deceptive collaboration
- * Prevents contamination of their recall

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Step III Collect Evidence Before It Is Gone

Documents: These should reflect exactly what has happened. Example of a Injury Report. It should tell what was seen when the client was checked. Bruises, Scratches, Cuts or Abrasions should be described completely. Length of the area, color of the area, where it is located.

If possible take a picture of the injury or scene. Collect any physician reports, body check forms staff notes regarding the injury.

STEP IV Interviews

Victim: In most cases the victim cannot write his statement. Therefore you will have to do this for him. Begin by writing a list of key questions you will be asking. Insure privacy. If you feel another person should be present choose a staff member that is not involved in the investigation.

Never start with, "Do you know what happened?" An example of how to begin the interview is to ask, "What can you tell me about this incident." or "What can you tell me about the _____." Never ask open ended questions.

Witnesses: The same applies to the witnesses. Ask where they were at the time of the incident. Example would be, "Where were you at 8:00 pm?" Do not put words in the mouth of witnesses, but insure that the questions you ask will tell you where they were, what they heard, what they saw and what happen after the incident. Note: Insure that you collect statements from all staff that may have seen or heard the incident.

It is a good idea to type the statement of your witnesses. Have them read what you typed and then have them sign and date it. The statements must give as much information as possible. Do not dismiss the witnesses until you feel you have gained as much information as possible. If it is not possible to type the statement insure they are written legibly and on a standard 8 ½ X 11 in paper.

Staff Involved in Allegation: I do not know what happened, I did not hit anyone, I don't abuse clients are not statements you should accept unless the statements also includes where they were when the incident occurred, what they were doing at the time, did they hear anything, what was the client doing at the time of the incident, did they notice any marks or injuries to the client.

Write the questions you will be asking and have the staff answer each one. Do not go on to the next one until you are satisfied with the statements given.

When you have gathered all your information and are satisfied with the statements you have collected, then you are ready to write your report. The report should be written by Region I Guidelines. This should not be done until you are satisfied that you have covered all areas of the investigation.