

SOP Template: Detailed Incident Documentation and Evidence Collection Guidelines

This SOP provides **detailed incident documentation and evidence collection guidelines** to ensure accurate, thorough, and systematic recording of incidents. It covers procedures for capturing factual information, preserving physical evidence, maintaining chain of custody, and ensuring confidentiality. The goal is to support effective incident investigation, legal compliance, and continuous improvement in safety and operational practices.

1. Purpose

To provide clear processes for documenting incidents and collecting evidence in a manner that ensures completeness, accuracy, legal sufficiency, and preservation of confidentiality.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in incident response, investigation, and documentation within the organization.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Incident	An unplanned event or occurrence that disrupts normal operations, causes harm, or poses a risk.
Evidence	Physical, electronic, or testimonial material that can establish facts about the incident.
Chain of Custody	Documented process to record the handling, transfer, and storage of evidence to maintain its integrity.

4. Responsibilities

- **Incident Responders:** Document all relevant incident details promptly and accurately.
- **Investigators:** Collect and preserve evidence, ensure chain of custody, and maintain confidentiality.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Review documentation for completeness and authorize escalation if necessary.

5. Procedures

5.1 Initial Incident Documentation

1. Record the date, time, location, and nature of the incident.
2. Identify involved persons and witnesses, including contact information.
3. Describe the sequence of events using objective, factual language.
4. Include photographs, diagrams, or sketches, where appropriate.

5.2 Evidence Collection

1. Identify and secure the scene to prevent disturbance of evidence.
2. Photograph or videotape the scene before any items are moved.
3. Collect physical evidence using gloves, evidence bags, and labels.
4. Properly label evidence with date, time, location, and collector's name.
5. Complete an evidence inventory log for all items collected.

5.3 Chain of Custody Maintenance

1. Document each transfer of evidence between individuals using a chain of custody form.
2. Store evidence in a secure, access-controlled location.
3. Retain all records according to organizational or legal retention policies.

5.4 Documentation and Reporting

1. Complete a standardized incident report form with all relevant information.
2. Attach supporting evidence, logs, photos, and statements to the report.
3. Submit the completed report to management or the designated authority for review.

5.5 Confidentiality and Data Protection

1. Restrict access to incident documentation and evidence to authorized personnel only.
2. Redact sensitive personal information as required by law or policy.
3. Store digital records with appropriate encryption and access controls.

6. Documentation Templates & Forms

- Incident Report Form
- Chain of Custody Form
- Evidence Inventory Log
- Witness Statement Form

7. Review and Updates

This SOP must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legal requirements and best practices.

8. References

- Relevant legal and regulatory requirements
- Organizational policies and procedures
- Industry standards (e.g., ISO 45001, OSHA)

9. Appendix

- Sample forms and checklists
- Contact list for incident reporting
- Emergency procedures and escalation matrix