



BY AMERICAN MEAT SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Internal Incidents, Investigations & Documentation

What are internal incidents?

Internal incidents refer to deviations within the facility that may have or do directly impact product safety or quality.

Examples: a broken piece of processing equipment discovered while or after processing, personnel injury, handling error leading to potential contamination

Value to Operation:

- Documented control of deviation and implicated product
- Documented, detailed investigation of the incident, product impacted and actions taken that can be referenced if:
 1. A customer complaint is received
 2. USDA inspector or 3rd Party Food Safety Auditor investigates and has questions
- Staff confidence in understanding the process exists to control and prevent potential recall situations

Internal Incident Response Process:

1. Incident occurs
2. STOP production line if the incident is a) active and in an area of open product or b) a human safety risk
3. Notify Manager(s) (Production Manager & Food Safety, Quality, Regulatory Manager)
4. Determine if the product is involved or at risk.
5. Isolate & place all products possibly implicated on hold
6. Put any affected/damaged equipment/parts on hold (lock out tag out, if applicable).
7. Cross functional team investigation followed up with a documented risk assessment.
8. Before resuming production, clean out any remaining meat, wash, and sanitize any equipment directly involved with the incident or implicated product.
9. Conduct a thorough investigation, and determine product disposition (if the product is affected)
10. Take immediate corrective action on product (dispose OR rework/recondition back to safe, quality product conditions)
11. Determine any preventative actions based on the investigation findings.
12. Document investigation, corrective & preventative actions.
13. Follow-up with relevant employee training (targeted to incident as well as any internal incident response refreshers needed to improve the process)





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Internal Incident & Documentation Example

Document No: XXXX
Approved By: FSQM Manager
Effective Date: mm/dd/yyyyyyz

Internal Incident Report

Date: 8.14.24
Department: Grinding

1. Product Involved? Yes (proceed to 1a-1e) No (proceed to 2)

a. Brand & Product Name: Bull's Beef, 80% Lean 1 lb Ground Beef Brick
b. Item Number: BB1100
c. Lot Code: Aug72024
d. Pounds of Product Affected: 700 lbs
e. Associated Hold Tag #: "P1001 1 of 2" & "P1001 2 of 2"

2. Equipment Involved: Finished Grinder

3. Error Type (check any that apply):
 Human Machine Supplier Other
 Metal Wood Brittle Plastic Packaging Material

4. Description of Incident:
Employee was attempting to move last portions of coarse grind through the finished grinder. Employee put plastic paddle into open grinder and it got caught and entangled in equipment paddles and crushed (see attached images).

5. Immediate Action Taken:
Stopped grinding immediately. Put output grind buggy on hold. Emptied product manually from grinder into separate container and put on hold. Went through affected product by hand to collect any broken paddle pieces. Returned all collected pieces to the Food Safety Quality Regulatory manager office.

6. Root Cause Investigation and Corrective Action Taken:
Upon employee interview, it was determined employee was not trained on safe and effective methods to move final portions of coarse grind through the grinder. All employees that may use this grinder were brought in for additional training on proper and safe methods to move final pounds of product through grinders. Employees were also briefed on the actions taken during this incident and how the internal incident process was implemented effectively to reduce product loss and prevent larger issues down the road (consumer finding plastic in product if was hidden & not reported).

QA Review By: *[Signature]* Date: 8.8.24

Additional Comments: See attached images of damaged paddle and paddle constructed back together from damaged pieces recovered from incident.



Attached image of the paddle damage



Attached image of the paddle pieced together to determine if/show evidence all pieces are accounted for.

Company culture must support the empowerment of employees to speak up when errors are made, not intimidation or fear of job loss.

Leadership:

Empowerment leadership results in processes being followed and safer products. Fear-based leadership will result in internal incident "cover-ups" and subsequent potential recall scenarios.

Accountability:

If the employee was conducting their job outside of the trained process or expectations and that resulted in an internal incident, disciplinary action may be warranted and justified.

Employee Training Topics:

1. Review Product & Equipment Hold SOP/Process
2. Immediate internal incident reporting to management
3. Actions to take in the event of an incident (present various scenarios)
4. Understand the value of their role in following the process.

