How to Facilitate an Incident Investigation Remotely

This guide outlines how to set your remote incident investigations up for success. At ThinkReliability, we use our Cause Mapping® method of root cause analysis for problem solving. You can download the *Cause Mapping* template in Microsoft Excel® for free here.

Perform Pre-Work

❑ Begin to collect and document what happened, when it happened, where it happened and the impact to the organization's goals.

❑ Begin to compile information related to the incident to gain an understanding of the incident as well as have the reference information available to show in future discussions. Common items to gather and/or request include:
  ❑ Incident report
  ❑ Interviews/witness statements
  ❑ Drawings, flow diagrams, piping and instrumentation diagrams
  ❑ Photos
  ❑ Written documentation (procedures, work permits or instructions, logs)
  ❑ Relevant data (lab, process, alarm)

❑ Ensure all collected information is available digitally.

❑ Alone or with another individual, begin the analysis to start revealing what evidence, documentation and resources are required, as well as who else needs to be a part of the team.

Kick Off the Investigation

❑ Identify your investigation team (4-6 people). The team should be comprised of people who are familiar with the incident, bring knowledge from different areas/departments, and were part of key decisions leading up to and during the incident.

❑ Coordinate a date/time for the kickoff meeting and send meeting invitations to get it on everyone's calendars.
  ❑ Limit the meeting to 1-2 hours.

❑ Set up a screen sharing online service (with dial-in phone number) that allows attendees to view your screen in real-time.
  ❑ Perform a test before the meeting to make sure attendees will be able to access the meeting platform.

❑ If there are some attendees working from a conference room, use a projector or screen that is large enough for the information being displayed to be visible.
  ❑ Host the meeting in a room large enough to accommodate the attendees (with seating that allows everyone to clearly view the screen).

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Lead the Remote Discussion(s)

❑ Introduce the goal of the investigation, give an overview of the problem-solving approach, and set expectations for the process and those in attendance.

❑ Using your pre-work, introduce the team to the information and the incident, and begin soliciting feedback and additional information.

❑ Edit, update or document information as it's received from the team.

❑ Make the details visually accessible to the group (e.g., if someone is discussing a photo, be sure the photo is on the screen so attendees can view).

❑ If the team gets sidetracked or there is a complex portion of the investigation that requires a smaller group discussion, note it and move on.

❑ Capture follow-up action items as they are identified.

❑ Limit background noise (encourage use of "mute" when necessary) and side discussions.

❑ Be cognizant of meeting length.

❑ Conclude the meeting and summarize the next steps.
  ❑ Review action items and assign owners and due dates, as well as understand who/where/how to send the collected information.

Follow Up

❑ Clean up the documentation created or used during the kickoff meeting.

❑ Distribute to the team so they can review and digest the information.

❑ As action items are collected, update the investigation documentation.

❑ Continue this process until the investigation is deemed complete.

CLICK HERE to download the free Cause Mapping® Template in Microsoft Excel®