

Keywords :- outline, good practice, interview technique, best quality

- **Time**
The interview should be held as soon as possible after the accident event so that the details are fresh in the witness's mind.
- **Place**
If possible the interview should include a visit to the scene of the accident event so that the visual prompts of the surroundings help the witness to clearly state what they saw. It may not be possible to conduct the entire interview in the scene of the accident, e.g. in a noisy machine shop if the machines are still running.
- **No Groups**
Witnesses should be interviewed one at a time, although you can offer the witness to be accompanied to help put them at ease. This is especially important where the witness is vulnerable e.g. a child (accompanying parent), or traumatised (a nurse, a doctor, a friend)
- **Language**
Avoid using jargon and legal language, talk in a way that matches the expected level of language as the witness, but don't try and emulate their accent. If you are unsure what a witness means by a word (perhaps local vernacular) then ask what they mean.
- **Explanation of purpose and need to record interviews**
The witness should be put at ease regarding the purpose of the interview, to find out what caused an accident and figure out what can be done to prevent a similar accident happening again. The need to take notes should be explained and this should not be done surreptitiously, but openly... personally I hand my notes to the witness and invite them to read them at the end of the interview.
- **Questions**
Ask open questions, who, what, where, when, how... be very careful about asking “why” because this is most likely an assumption on the part of the witness... we want to deal with facts not assumptions.
- **Listening**
Listen attentively to the witnesses whole answer without interruption. Clarify answers which may include deductions e.g. “did you actually see him slip off the ladder ?” “did you actually see the object hitting him ?”
- **Notes**
Take notes of what was said so that you are not relying on your memory
- **Summarise**
After the witness has answered your questions, read back your notes and allow the witness to correct any mistakes, and provide extra information.
- **Thank**
Thank the witness for their time and for their assistance.