



Designation: E 1020 – 96

Standard Practice for Reporting Incidents¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice sets forth guidelines for the collection and preservation of information and physical evidence and the preparation of a documentation report relative to any incident(s) involving personal injury, property damage, or commercial loss which may reasonably be expected to be the subject of litigation.

1.2 For additional standards promulgated by ASTM committee E-30 on Forensic Sciences, see Practices E 620, E 678, E 860, and E 1188.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*

E 620 Practice for Reporting Opinions of Technical Experts²

E 678 Practice for Evaluation of Technical Data²

E 860 Practice for Examining and Testing Items That Are or May Become Involved in Litigation²

E 1188 Practice for the Collection and Preservation of Information and Physical Items by a Technical Investigator²

3. Significance and Use

3.1 This practice is intended to become applicable when incidents occur which may reasonably be expected to become the subject of litigation.

3.2 This practice is suggested for documenting transitory conditions and data that may change shortly after an incident and be lost forever if not properly and promptly documented.

3.3 The primary use of this practice is to preserve pertinent information for use by technical experts and other technical personnel who may be called upon to reconstruct the events surrounding the incident.

4. General

4.1 The report described in this practice may be prepared by any person(s) in a formal capacity. Persons investigating in a

formal capacity include but may not be limited to federal, state, local officials, employers, owners, insurance personnel and other technical experts.

4.2 The data documented by the report shall be factual and should not contain opinions, hypotheses, judgments or conclusions, nor should this report fix blame.

5. Content

5.1 An incident report should contain the following:

5.1.1 Detailed chronological narrative of what occurred before, during, and immediately after the incident; including any associated personal injury, property damage, or commercial loss. The sources of information shall be identified.

5.1.2 Photographs which impartially identify and depict the scene, the items, or systems involved in the incident, and the post-incident conditions. Where possible, such photographs should be taken from many directions and should include overall site views, overall item and system views, intermediate views, and close-up views.

5.1.3 Identification of items or systems involved in the incident. Where possible this may include manufacturer, model number, serial number, and date of manufacture.

5.1.4 Identification of the persons involved in, and all known witnesses to, the incident. If possible, witness statements should be obtained. Identification should include the full name, current address and information on how they may be contacted.

5.1.5 Description of the condition of the items or systems involved in the incident and any apparent alterations.

5.1.6 Information relative to all evidence either removed from the incident scene or intentionally left in place at the incident scene in order to protect and preserve its “as found” condition.

5.1.6.1 Name and address of all known persons who removed the evidence, and the person(s) who took custody of the evidence and information on how they may be contacted.

5.1.6.2 Detailed description of the evidence, including sketches or photographs where appropriate.

5.1.6.3 Photographs, sketches, and written descriptions, or combination thereof, of both the location of the evidence before removal and any identification marks placed on evidence for traceability.

5.1.6.4 Date(s) removed.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E30 on Forensic Sciences and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E30.11 on Interdisciplinary Forensic Science Standards.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.