

5 STEPS For Taking a Witness Statement

When documenting an incident, it is important part of an investigation to interview any witnesses. Here are 5 steps to assist in obtaining statements.



Management Personnel Should Take the Statement

Only management personnel (e.g., an administrator or executive director) or a risk manager should take the statement. Ideally, another management individual should be present for observational purposes only.

1



Conduct Timely and Separate

The interview should be done ASAP after the incident while the memory and experience is fresh. If there is more than one witness that needs to be interviewed, conduct each interview separately to ensure each individual's recollection.

2



Contain Only Objective Information

Focus on gathering objective information and stating the obvious. Keep asking who, what, when and where. Do not forget to state the obvious even if it seems unimportant in the moment. Limit why questions to reduce speculation.

3



Ask Open Ended Questions

Do not ask leading questions to ensure that the most information is obtained and that no biases of the interviewer impact the witness' memory. Try not to interrupt the responses and ask clarifying questions whenever necessary.

4



Review with Witness; Witness Signs Statement

After the statement is complete, the witness should read and review for accuracy. If the witness expresses concerns about reading due to language barriers, read the statement out loud. Once the witness reviews the statement, the witness should sign and date it.

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