

Third-Party Investigation

Why it's a good Idea

Healthcare Accidents Continue to Occur

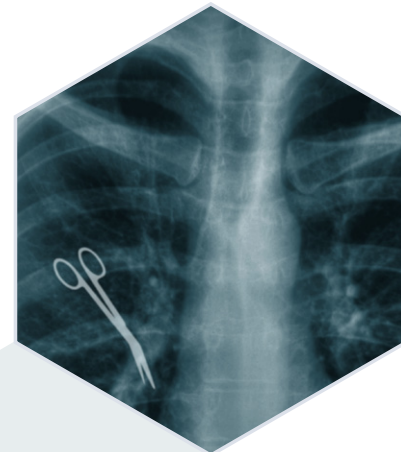
A recent healthcare provider survey conducted by ECRI Institute revealed that 75% of more than 400 respondents never involve third-party accident investigation assistance. Instead, investigations are performed by hospital personnel, in some cases, those who were involved in the incident. However, there are times when investigations can greatly benefit from outside perspectives. Here's why:

- ▶ Investigations often require expertise and test equipment that are unavailable internally.
- ▶ Internal investigations can be tainted by conflict of interest (e.g., those who use or maintain devices investigate misuse and maintenance failures).
- ▶ Internal investigations consume time and resources, affecting workflow.
- ▶ Legal action can expose internal investigators to subpoena, deposition, and trial.
- ▶ A third-party can avoid the politics that may hinder internal investigations.
- ▶ Third-party investigators are adept at
 - Incident reconstruction or simulation
 - Determining the mechanism of injury
 - Maintaining the chain of custody
 - Avoiding inappropriate release or alteration of evidence
 - Offering actionable recommendations to prevent recurrence

The Risks of Waiting

Hospitals may opt to postpone an investigation until legal action is taken against them, or perform an internal investigation and then retain a defense expert if a claim is brought. These approaches are risky because:

- ▶ Investigations long after the fact are not as informative or defensible.
- ▶ Other patients can be injured in the same way.
- ▶ Devices may not be testable or in the same condition as at the time of the incident.



With over 50 years of experience, ECRI Institute's investigators can be your trusted third-party.

When the unexpected happens, bring in the best

For immediate assistance, call (610) 825-6000, e-mail accidents@ecri.org, or visit www.ecri.org/accidents