

# Writing for Impact

## Template 8

### Report

The *Executive Summary* includes key background information, plus the most important findings and recommendations.

#### Executive summary

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, around 200 litres of 1,1,1-Trichloroethane leaked onto the floor of the warehouse. Fortunately, there were no injuries as a result, but the accident was costly and **could have been much more serious**. This report finds that the accident resulted from understaffing and from a general failure to follow Health and Safety procedures. It **recommends** improved training and closer monitoring by management.

Use your judgement to decide which facts are most relevant to senior managers. If the report follows a specific incident, you should start by briefly saying what happened and when.

The reader will want to know why this report is important, so state this clearly in your summary.

You should have at least one sentence summarising the findings and at least one for your recommendations.

In the *Introduction*, state clearly and concisely the purpose of the report.

#### Introduction

This report **analyses** the causes of a recent accident in our factory, and proposes changes to our Health and Safety (H&S) and Staff Training policies to prevent a recurrence of such problems.

Use present simple verbs with non-human subjects (e.g. *this report analyses / proposes / recommends*) to make your report more official.

The *Research* section describes what you did when you were preparing this report.

#### Research

For the purposes of this report, **I have spoken** to all the staff who were present at the time of the accident and those who were involved in the clean-up operation. I have also reviewed our complete H&S Procedures (see Appendix 1) and Training Programme (see Appendix 2).

You can use present perfect to describe your completed research.

Put any background reading in an appendix.

The *Findings* section is often the longest part of the report. This is where you explain what happened and when, and what the consequences were.

#### Findings

The accident **occurred at** approximately 16:50 on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August. A fork-lift truck (FLT) driver accidentally knocked the drum of 1,1,1-Trichloroethane while lifting a neighbouring drum into position. This caused the drum to leak. The leak went unnoticed until staff returned to work on the Friday morning and found the contents of the drum had spilled over a large area of the warehouse floor.

**The FLT driver claims that** he checked the drum after he knocked it, but did not notice that it was leaking. He **says** he did not mention it to his supervisor, but

Use past simple to describe the sequence of key events.

Focus on reporting facts and other people's opinions. Save your own opinions for the Conclusions section.

You can use present simple for reporting verbs (e.g. *he claims, he says*).

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In the Conclusions section, express your opinion about what the findings mean (or might mean), and how they relate to each other.

### Conclusions

The cause of the accident was a simple human error. Errors like this are inevitable in a large warehouse like ours, so it is important that our procedures are strong enough to predict and plan for accidents. In this case, it appears that we already have good procedures in place, but that they are not being followed on a day-to-day basis. The shortage of staff in August, and in particular the lack of effective management supervision, may well have been a factor in this accident.

### Recommendations

- Provide urgent retraining for all warehouse staff on our current H&S procedures.
- All members of staff to receive H&S training at least once every six months, and whenever they are moved to a new position.
- There should be one duty manager responsible for the warehouse on every working day. We cannot have a repeat of the situation where there appears to be no-one in charge.
- The duty manager must be more vigilant for any breaches of H&S procedures. All breaches to be investigated and dealt with according to Code of Conduct (see Appendix 3).

You can use imperatives for simple recommendations, instead of 'we must ...'.

Finish your report with a series of clear, decisive recommendations.