How to Optimize Your Incident Reporting System

Every healthcare organization strives to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for their employees and patients. And the best way to do so is by identifying and reducing risk and putting protocols into place to prevent harm. But how can a healthcare facility protect their employees and make changes if they don't have a full picture of the incidents, injuries, illnesses and exposures that are taking place within their organization? Enter: advanced incident reporting and analysis software.

More than 2.8 million workplace injuries and illnesses are reported annually to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in accordance with the regulations set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). That may leave one wondering how many potential incidents have taken place that weren't recorded.

Hospitals and other healthcare facilities, by the nature of the environment, present potential hazards in the workplace. In fact, the healthcare industry reports the highest number of injuries and illnesses, accounting for approximately 1 in 5 reported by private industry employers. The most common injuries include overexertion or pain from lifting, bending or reaching; slips, trips, and falls; contact with objects or equipment; violence; and exposure to harmful substances, while the most common illnesses are skin disorders and respiratory conditions.

Having an effective incident reporting software solution in place can help healthcare organizations build a culture of safety, reduce injuries and save money. Whether you are looking to implement a new incident reporting process or optimize your current one, these four features of an incident reporting software are crucial for success.

Employee access to self-report anytime, anywhere

Underreporting is a common problem in the healthcare environment. It's crucial that employees understand the organization's reporting policy and the benefits of reporting, feel comfortable with the reporting process and feel empowered to self-report. An effective incident reporting software should eliminate barriers to reporting for individual employees and provide access to self-report 24/7 from any location.

The solution should have a clean and user-friendly design that is easy to log in to and with intuitive workflows, providing a seamless process for employees. An easy-to-use and widely accepted incident reporting software can help reduce the fear of retaliation and lack of reporting that can be an issue in healthcare.

Automated workflows and communication

Incident reporting shouldn't require paperwork and manual processes that take days, weeks or even months to complete, taking away valuable time from your staff and creating a barrier to reporting. Forward-thinking incident reporting software provides automated workflows that begin with the ability to submit a report online immediately after an event takes place, automatically alert an administrator of the event, and map out the appropriate next steps with just a click. Additionally, auto reminders and alerts for follow ups and updates are essential in an effective solution.

Studies have shown that the average cost of workers compensation claims increases as the delay in reporting incidents increases. A system with built-in workflows will direct employees and administrators to the next step they need to take based on how they answer questions and what information they submit. The automated workflows can help shorten the turnaround times of the submission, response and recovery period, while addressing the employee's needs and saving the organization costs.

For example, an employee who reports an injury on the job may be automatically directed to the employee health nurse or employee health clinic for examination rather than going to the ER and costing the organization approximately $1,500 plus potential workers compensation fees. In the healthcare industry, 41% of incidents that caused days away from work resulted in an ER visit or hospitalization that could have possibly been prevented if handled in-house.

Data analysis and reporting dashboards

Imagine the missed opportunity for trend analysis if all of your incident reports were filed on paper forms and stored in a dusty, old filing cabinet. Next-gen incident reporting systems feature the ability to aggregate data for trend analysis and real-time reporting that's audit-ready. OSHA requires employers to keep accurate records of work-related injuries and illnesses, and they may perform an inspection at any time. If a violation of OSHA is found, organizations may receive a fine or a citation with directions to correct the issue.

The main objective of utilizing an incident reporting system is to keep employees safe by identifying and mitigating risk and encouraging immediate organizational improvement. The ability to drive down into data and identify trends and insights by facility, department, role, incident type and more provides the organization with actionable information to make real changes that keep workers safe and productive.

Optimized for OSHA requirements

A key consideration when choosing an incident reporting software is its ability to support OSHA requirements. OSHA requires that organizations keep records of serious work-related injuries and illnesses for at least five years and post a summary of their workplace incidents on an annual basis. Look for an incident reporting solution that includes digital questionnaires that automatically populate OSHA forms 300, 300A and 301 as well as incident tracking logs, and produces a completed PDF that the system administrator can submit to OHSA directly.

In addition to having the ability to integrate data automatically into OSHA forms, it's crucial that the sensitive personal data submitted on an incident report is saved in a system that is safe, secure and HIPAA-compliant.

The future of incident reporting

Gone are the days of paper forms, manual data entry or in-person document hand-offs. Innovative incident reporting software features proactive, comprehensive, customizable and integrated solutions that dramatically streamline the reporting process, follow-up communication and data analysis capabilities. Ultimately, the advanced technology solution helps reduce costs and risk while enhancing productivity and safety in the workplace, contributing to a safer, healthier and happier workforce.

Explore the possibilities

Immuware is a comprehensive employee and occupational health tracking software that's configured with the flexibility to meet your unique requirements. In addition to meeting all of the features discussed above, Immuware's updated incident reporting module now offers more advanced trend analysis tools, enhanced automated workflows, secure storage in the cloud and improved reporting dashboards. All features of Immuware's incident reporting module are customizable to help you achieve your compliance goals. The dedicated Immuware team can help you streamline and redesign your incident reporting process to be the most efficient while meeting all OSHA requirements. To learn more or schedule a demo, contact the Immuware team at info@immuware.com.