• Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.
• Be a good listener. Allow witnesses to tell the story in their words, in the time they need.
• Ask follow-up questions
• Take notes but try to be inconspicuous.
• Record the interview. Remember to obtain the individual’s consent before recording.
• Review the statement, confirm with the witness that the statement is correct, and sign it after the witness does.
• End on a positive note.

Tactics to avoid:

• Intimidating, interrupting or prejudging the witness.
• Assisting the witness in answering questions.
• Asking leading questions.
• Becoming emotionally involved.
• Jumping to conclusions.
• Revealing discoveries of the investigation.
• Making promises that can’t be kept.

General, open-ended questions to ask:

• Where were you at the time of the accident?
• What were you doing at the time?
• What did you see or hear?
• What were the environmental conditions (weather, light, noise, etc.) at the time?
• What was (were) the injured worker(s) doing at the time?
• In your opinion, what caused the accident?
• How might similar accidents be prevented in the future?
• Were any other witnesses around? Do you know the names of other witnesses?
• How are you connected with others involved in the accident?