



# Weekly Safety Meeting

*Your Safety Is Our Business®*

Volume 2, Issue 52

December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## Close Calls/Near Misses

According to statistics, about 3 billion “close calls” or “near misses” occur annually in United States workplaces. Statistics also show that for every 300 near misses, 29 minor injuries occur, along with one injury serious enough to keep the injured person out of work.

A close call, near miss, or accident without injury is easy to shrug off and forget. But there is a danger in brushing off accidents that don't hurt, harm, or damage.

Reducing the number of close calls automatically lowers the odds of having minor injuries (frequency) or a major injury (severity). Near misses that go uncorrected will inevitably become accidents.

Sometimes there are multiple causes for an accident involving equipment (unguarded machinery), environment (poor lighting or noise level), people (procedures not understood or not followed), or management (allowed shortcuts). Don't rush to judge.

Examine the facts and find what's missing. Look for both immediate and underlying causes. An immediate cause may be an unsafe condition like a mechanical failure or it could be an unsafe action by an employee. The underlying cause could be poor machine maintenance, a missing guard, a crowded work area, or a lack of training.

### Learn from close calls/near misses:

In order to learn from close calls, the incidents must be reported and investigated.

- Employees need to understand that the purpose of studying near misses is not to punish employees or assign blame; it is to improve workplace safety and reduce injuries.
- Reporting close calls leads to improvements in work areas and job procedures while allowing the correction of unsafe conditions before an injury occurs.
- Failing to report even a small incident allows hazards to escalate into more serious situations.

When a close call happens, it should immediately send up a red warning flag that something was wrong, unplanned, unexpected, and could happen again. The next time it happens, it could result in serious damage, injury or death.

The list of possible near misses in a workplace may be virtually endless, but here are just a few examples:

- A heavy object falls off a ledge or shelf and thuds to the floor a foot or so away from workers (the next falling object may find a human target).
- A worker slips on a slick surface and almost—but not quite—falls (the next person along may fall and end up in the hospital).
- A worker jumps back just in time to avoid being hit by an opening door (that door will hit somebody one of these days).



## Recognizing unsafe acts:

Statistics tell us that most injuries are caused by unsafe acts, but most employees say they don't commit unsafe acts. This discrepancy shows that more attention needs to be placed on recognizing unsafe acts before an injury takes place.

- Being in a hurry or becoming angry tempts you to commit unsafe acts. Don't succumb to temptation; stay focused on your safety commitment.
- Don't let unsafe acts slip into your work routine.
  - Take a moment to consider the safety of every action you take and avoid becoming complacent about the hazards of your work area.
- If unsafe conditions are discovered, correct or report the situation right away.
  - Don't allow a poor attitude to place other workers at risk.
- Remember that reporting close calls and near miss incidents can improve your work facilities and job procedures, which helps create a safer, more productive workplace for everyone. But, remember; it won't work without your participation.

Obviously every close call is a call for action. Sometimes it's something you can fix right away yourself; other times it requires specialized attention. In either case, the close call should never be ignored and should always be reported. That way the next "real" accident may not happen after all.

Workers should inspect the work area daily for unsafe conditions or unsafe actions and, if found, report them to the supervisor. Hazard awareness is key to preventing accidents before they happen. Take steps to eliminate hazards as soon as they are discovered. Learn the real lesson from close calls. They can happen again and again until they cause injury, so tell your supervisor about every accident, no matter how minor it may seem at the time. You never know when an incident may be repeated and result in an injury or even death.

**Be alert...Don't get hurt!!!**



## Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests



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