



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Reporting – A Near Miss

A “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. When a “near miss” 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.

Close calls should be a wake-up call for you—they're saying: "Something's wrong! You need to fix it! Now!"

A worker received an electric shock on a piece of equipment he was using. He was not injured and he did not report the incident. A few days later another worker also received a shock from the same defective equipment and again did not report the problem. Within days a third worker also received an electrical shock that killed him.

This true story illustrates what can happen when we ignore close calls in the work place. A close call is a chance to identify a hazard and correct it before someone is seriously injured or killed.

One of the biggest problems with near misses is that employees tend not to report them.

To counteract this dangerous tendency, your need to treat near misses just like accidents. In other words, they should be taken seriously and reported immediately.

The sooner a safety problem is brought to management's attention, the sooner you can find out what's going on and take action to prevent someone from getting hurt the next time the same thing happens.

Near Misses:

- Most accidents can be predicted by near misses.
- According to the National Safety Council, 75 percent of all accidents are preceded by one or more near misses.
- The difference between a near miss and a serious injury might be a fraction of an inch or a split second of time.
- Near misses are a red flag--a warning that something is very wrong and requires immediate attention.

Reporting Near Misses:

- Supervisors are not looking to blame anyone when they ask employees to report near misses; they just want to get to the root of the problem so that future accidents and injuries can be prevented.



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- It is employees' responsibility to report a near miss even if they've removed the hazard or corrected the problem themselves. Many near misses are just the tip of the iceberg--signs of larger safety problems that need attention, such as poor housekeeping, the need for an ongoing maintenance plan, poor work area layout, problematic work procedures, or insufficient training in safe work practices. You need to know about every little safety-related problem.

Sometimes there are multiple causes for a near miss: 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.

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 near misses. 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.

Checking a NEAR thing...can prevent the REAL thing!!

