



# Nearmiss Reporting

A Near Miss is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, damage or product loss - but had the potential to do so. The difference between a near miss and a full blown incident is often a fraction of a second or a fraction of an inch that may not be there the next time. Near misses are warnings of accidents in the making.

By accepting these warnings and looking for their causes, recurring of these situations can be prevented.

## Why all incidents should be reported?

When incidents are not reported, their causes usually go uncorrected. That means they may happen again, perhaps producing tomorrow's disabling injury or fatality. (This can be illustrated by the case of the worker who slipped on a floor made slippery by a small leak in a hydraulic line. He did not suffer any injury. Two days later, when the line was still leaking, another employee slipped on the liquid, fell, and broke a leg. At that point the first employee told the company investigating the accident about his own previous near-miss. Had he reported it promptly, chances are the defective hydraulic line would have been repaired before the accident happened.)

## Why incidents often are not reported

There are many reasons why a worker might choose not to report an incident in which he or she was involved. All of these are understandable, but we should recognize that none of them are acceptable.

## What are some of the reasons workers don't report incidents?

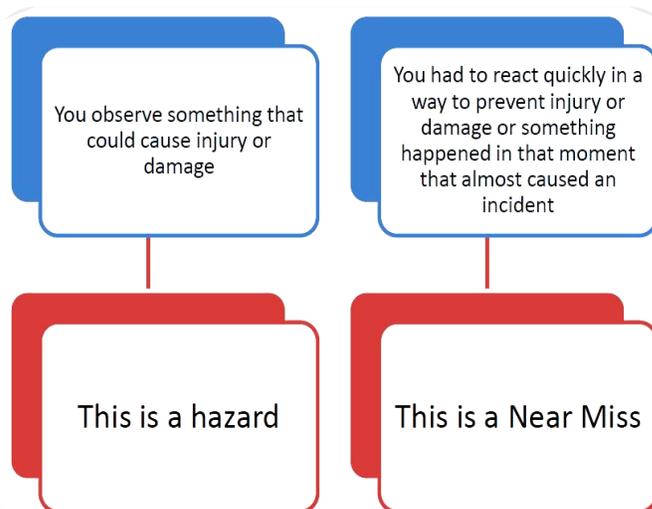
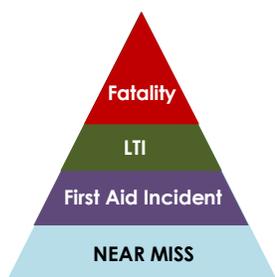
Probably the most common is failure to understand the importance of reporting and the harm that could result by not doing so. Here are a few other examples:

- o Fear of the supervisor's disapproval.
- o Not wanting the incident on their work records.
- o Dislike for the red tape involved (i.e., investigation, forms, meetings).
- o Reluctance to spoil the company's safety record.
- o Not wanting to be the subject of an incident investigation.

## What can be learned from an incident

The whole purpose of reporting and investigating an incident or near-miss is to find ways of making sure the same factors that were present on the occasion don't result in an accident at some time in future. Review these questions regarding near-misses:

- o What were the circumstances surrounding the near-miss? Was there a hazard that the employee should have been aware of?
- o Is there a safety rule covering the situation?
- o If so, did the employee know it? If there isn't such a rule, should there be one?
- o Were any safety devices, clothing, or equipment used improperly or not used at all?
- o Is there Have there been other near-misses of the same type?



## Near miss reporting... really matters

Near-miss is all those situations where something could go wrong but did not, more usually by good luck rather than good management. Identify near-miss situations before they happen and you are then able to manage them and prevent harm resulting.

To take effective action to prevent injury and loss, you need good information on what can go wrong and how to sort it. In the vast majority of situations, workers and site supervisors are in the best place to take that action. This is because they are the ones who are closest to the health and safety risks to themselves or others.

Attitudes like "Not my job" or "Not my responsibility" or "I'll only get blamed" need to be countered. In the same way, someone saying "I knew that was going to happen" after an incident is not helpful. These attitudes grow out of what is sometimes called a "blame culture". A blame culture places more emphasis on what's gone wrong than on how to prevent it happening. Blame is a disincentive to getting things right as soon as possible.

We've all heard or used the phrase close call or "near miss" in one way or another. Have you ever really stopped and asked "What is a near miss"?

What does this mean to you? A Near-Miss is an

### What are the causes for Near Misses?

- Unsafe acts - such as improper lifting; walking under an overhead load; cutting, grinding, or chipping without safety glasses; not using proper Personal Protective Equipment, etc.
- Unsafe conditions - such as poorly maintained equipment, oil or grease on floors, welding leads that have been laid in walkways, trash and boxes that have been left in hallways, etc.
- Hurrying and taking risks to complete a task or to wrap up a job at quitting time.

### Report Near Misses Before They Become Accidents:

- Once a near miss occurs, report it immediately to your supervisor. The potential for such incidents exists all over the workplace, so ALL employees (not just supervisors) must help identify them.
- If the near miss is a result of an unsafe condition, don't continue to work under that condition until the problem has been corrected and your supervisor gives the okay to proceed.
- If the incident is a result of unsafe acts, be certain that everyone involved has been alerted to their actions before they continue with the job