

Topic: Near Misses

“Wow that was a close call”. We have all been there done that! A serious incident, that comes very close to happening, a near-miss. The National Safety Council refers to a near miss as an “unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage but had the potential to do so.”

Popular TV personality and Contractor Mike Holmes, shared a story of a near miss that potentially could have caused an eye injury. While sawing a piece of wood, the blade hit a knot that caused a piece of wood to fly up and hit him just under his eye. Mike admits that part way through the job, he realized that he had neglected to put on his safety glasses. Rather than stopping and putting on his safety glasses, he told himself “Oh it will be ok” and continued with the job. Following his near miss, he reports he always takes the time and effort to wear his safety glasses.

Typically, in the workplace near misses are ignored or never reported. Most near misses often precede an event that does involve a loss or an injury. By creating a culture where near misses are treated as tools of prevention and lessons learned, companies can prevent many serious events from occurring. Some of the reasons that employees are reluctant to report near misses are the fear of being blamed, penalized or being perceived as careless.

Some companies are beginning to implement steps that encourage developing a culture for individuals to report near misses.

Creating a Culture of Identifying and Reporting Near Misses

- Training on how to identify what a near miss is
- Allow for anonymous and simple reporting of near misses
- Educate employees on the value of what can be learned and the losses that can be avoided
- Incentive programs that reward those that participate in reporting and that take the precautions to avoid future incidents
- Management and supervisors being committed to model and take seriously near miss reporting systems
- Communicating regularly and consistently throughout the organization, the potential incidents that were prevented as a result of the reporting system

Three Key Elements once a Near Miss is reported

1. Carefully investigate it
2. Determine the root cause
3. Implement appropriate controls

Conclusion

- Know and use your company's system on reporting near misses
- Learn to recognize potential hazards
- Follow the safety procedures outlined by your company to protect yourself and your fellow workers
- Speak up against cutting corners and taking chances
- Work as a team to create a safe environment

Quiz

1. One of the reasons employees are reluctant to report near misses is fear of being penalized.
True or False
 2. It is not important to report a near miss because no harm, no foul.
True or False
 3. A serious incident that results in injury or loss has usually had many near misses that precede it?
True or False
 4. What is important to do once a near miss has been reported?
 - A. Carefully investigate it
 - B. Determine the root cause
 - C. Implement appropriate controls
 - D. All of the above
 5. In the Workplace, injury and loss prevention require a team effort
True or False
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1. True
 2. False
 3. True
 4. D
 5. True