

A NEAR MISS IS NOT A LUCKY BREAK (CLOSE CALLS)

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

A near miss is a chain of events that very nearly results in property damage, serious injury, or death, but not quite. The official definition of a near miss is: "an unplanned event that had the potential to result in an injury or physical damage (but did not)."

A near miss is not a lucky break. A near miss is an indication of a problem, either systematic or mechanical, that has very real potential for hazard. It's a red flag calling for change to prevent a similar situation from resulting in worker injuries or deaths.

A near miss can occur in virtually every industry. Many incidents of property damage, injury or death can be predicted by near misses. Engaging a near miss as a preemptive problem-solving opportunity is crucial.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

A problem indicated by a near miss might involve damaged or broken equipment, such as frayed cords, broken ladder rungs, a non-functioning parking brake, ill-fitting machine guards, loose handrails, loose hinges or old PPE. The list goes on.

A near miss may also occur due to a procedural error. This could be the result of inadequate safety training, poor or non-existent communication, or failure of a worker to adhere to appropriate safety procedures.

An error may also occur due to simple carelessness, such as a dropped tool, or a shoddy packing/storage job.

Example

An office janitor was mopping an office hallway late one evening. Since it was late, the janitor was not worried about foot traffic in the area. He figured it was unlikely that anyone would be around, so he did

not put up the appropriate "wet floor" warning signs. While the janitor was mopping the tile floor out of sight of the elevator, a harried company CEO rushed out of the elevator doors and skidded across the newly mopped hallway, barely retaining his balance.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

If you nearly run into material, such as carelessly stored products protruding into an aisle, deal with the hazard or notify your supervisor before the next worker or customer to come along gets hurt.

Make sure you understand each near-miss scenario you encounter, including what went wrong, each possible outcome of the incident and how to address the hazards. Be wary of how your co-workers conduct themselves and work together to prevent injury and safeguard one another from incidents. Compare your routines and habits with theirs and share tips.

Take responsibility for the equipment or machinery you use frequently. If this equipment or machinery causes you problems or appears to be broken, report it to your supervisor.

Ensure you understand and follow all safety procedures. If you want to review or brush up on your safety training, or if you are confused about a particular procedure, talk to your supervisor without delay.

FINAL WORD

Seize the moment! Take close calls seriously, but more importantly, use them as learning opportunities to prevent incidents. In addition to being red flags, close calls are golden opportunities to prevent a near miss from turning into a direct hit.

QUIZ

- 1. A near miss is a lucky break as long as you cover it up.**
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
- 2. A near miss is not preventable because it is unpredictable.**
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
- 3. Near misses are critical preemptive problem-solving opportunities.**
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
- 4. Everyone drops tools every once in a while. You shouldn't worry about it.**
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

John has been employed in a busy plastics and chemical plant. Just before quitting time, John was going into the employee lunch room to retrieve his jacket. As he was about to leave, he slipped on a coffee spill but managed to retain his balance. Does he report the situation just before the 5 o'clock whistle? What would you do?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.[illegible]

AFTER THE TALK

PROVIDED FOLLOW-UP TO WORKERS THAT DID POORLY ON THE QUIZ

- NAME: _____

DATE: _____

- ## OBSERVED WORKERS

TASK(S):

- DATE: _____

REFRESHER TRAINING

TOPIC(S):

DATE: _____

OTHER (DESCRIBE): _____

MEETING DATE: _____

LOCATION: _____

CONDUCTED BY:

NOTES

[illegible]

1. False
2. False

3. True
4. False

ATTENDANCE

[illegible]

INSTRUCTOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

SAFETY TALK: _____