Close Calls



WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Close calls / near misses are red flag warnings about unsafe conditions, actions or equipment. You should take action to correct the situation and report all close calls, no matter how minor they may seem.

Excuses for ignoring close calls / near misses are unacceptable.

- "I don't have time to deal with it."
- "It is too close to quitting time."
- "There is nobody around to report."

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

There are on average hundreds of close calls / near misses that go unreported.

Ignoring close calls can lead to serious results, including injuries and fatalities. A mild shock for one person could prove to be fatal for the next. If you've just jumped out of the way because some poorly stacked materials have fallen, the next person to come along could be crushed. A worker is nearly hit by a forklift because visibility is obscured at a pedestrian crossing. The next person could be run over.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Close call incidents trigger the fact that something is seriously wrong. They allow us the opportunity to investigate and correct the situation before the same thing happens again and causes an injury or death.
- Experience has proven that if the causes of accidents are not removed, the potential for an accident will occur again and again. Unfortunately, a typical story told after many accidents is; "Yeah, that happened to Jim as well – just last week!"
- Why are close call incidents not reported? Typical reasons are: fear of reprimand or repercussions, red tape, not being aware of their importance in controlling future accidents, embarrassment, the spoiling of a safety or production record or lack of feedback when similar issues have previously been raised.

- If you keep silent about a close call – you may avoid having to deal with it. But try to explain that to a co-worker who ends up in a wheelchair because of a hazard that you knew existed but were too proud to talk about.
- Controlling close call incidents is really the secret to reducing the overall frequency of accidents. One survey of 300 companies discovered that for every 600 close call incidents, they had 30 property damages, 10 minor accidents and 1 very serious accident.

The following practices and procedures must be implemented to combat the deleterious impact of close call / near miss scenario.

- Check work areas and equipment daily.
- Take steps to evaluate your work practices. Are you following all safety procedures? Are you cutting corners to save time? Are you turning a blind eye to fellow workers? unsafe practices?
- Barricade any slip and fall hazards on floors immediately.
- Tag any damaged or broken machinery or equipment.
- Familiarize yourself with your company’s close call reporting system.
- Report any unsafe acts, improperly used equipment and work conditions.
- Report and follow up on any close calls to make sure that a hazard is identified and corrected.

FINAL WORD

A close call should not be considered a negative or inconvenient event. It is an important opportunity to discover a hazard and correct it without anyone being injured. Prevent injuries and fatalities by reporting all close calls and near misses. Be sure to make a report to ensure that corrective action has been taken to remedy the situation.