Don’t Miss the Near-Misses Meeting Kit



Most safety managers do not usually put much credence into near-miss accidents. Most employees do not even consider reporting them when one happens to them or a coworker, dismissing it as a “no harm done” incident. However, near-miss accidents could be opportunities for corrective actions to prevent serious injuries or fatalities in the workplace.

DO NOT WAIT FOR ACCIDENTS – REPORT NEAR-MISSES

- Once a near miss occurs, report it immediately to the nearest foreman or 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. Wait 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.

WHY WORKERS DO NOT REPORT NEAR-MISSES

- Fearing getting in trouble or be embarrassed about their part in the incident.
- Not understanding the importance near miss reporting plays in accident prevention.
- Being worried about breaking a safety or production record for so many days without an incident.
- Being discouraged by the lack of action when similar issues have been reported.

NEAR MISSES REPORTING POLICY

- Establish a near miss policy and set of procedures that are clearly presented to and understood by all.
- Uphold and celebrate a culture of near miss reporting. Support your employees, managers, and supervisors.
- Continually educate employees about near miss reporting and why it is key. Let them know that they are an important part of making workplaces everywhere much safer.

- Be sure that your policy and procedures are easy to comprehend and employ regularly.
- Don’t let the message die. Keep preaching the importance of this type of reporting.
- Let the near miss reports lead you to a safer work environment. Act and always seek to improve.
- Let workers know that near miss reporting is non-punitive. Many of them may hold back for that very reason.
- Think about what incentives might get your employees on board. Your mission is to celebrate the fact that you’re growing safer in your company every day.
- Consider incentives that acknowledge the participation of your employees – the recognition and reporting of near misses and potential hazards they notice.
- Reporting will become second nature if you do it the right way.
- Avoid incentives that recognize supervisors and management, solely based on their performance and outcome of OSHA recordable rates. You don’t want the plan to backfire and suppress reporting and hinder your safety efforts.
- Include this near miss training for all new employees as a part of their orientation.
- Find a way to celebrate the successes of the near miss reporting.

ENCOURAGE WORKERS TO REPORT NEAR-MISSES

- Train employees to properly recognize and spot hazards and near-misses and the importance of reporting.
- Provide a system to report near-misses easily and any safety concerns that are non-punitive.
- Provide timely feedback to the employees on their suggestions and/or concerns, or talk about anonymous reporting during employee meetings.
- Inform and train all employees on newly discovered safety hazards and any new preventive measures installed to address the potential hazard.
- Offer simple, non-monetary incentives for reporting near-misses such as a certificate of appreciation.
- Celebrate and share the success of the near-miss reporting program with all employees. For instance, lower incidences of injuries and the potential savings to the company as a result of the prevented accidents.

WAYS TO IMPROVE NEAR-MISS REPORTING

1. Provide employees with a system that is easy to use, understand and communicate reports instantly.
2. Empower employees to fill incident details in reports accurately without generating additional work.
3. Report at-risk behavior of close aides without disclosing your identity to avoid the fear of being blamed.
4. To encourage proactive participation, employees need to know all the specifics of the importance of near miss reporting systems and how to use it.
5. Set rapid action teams to investigate and resolve incidents with minimal loss to work-time.
6. Analyze trends and record new findings to integrate into other safety systems like behavior-based system (BBS) to check incident prone tendencies.

7. Highlight recorded hazards and lessons learnt during toolbox talks, bulletin boards, employee orientation programs, etc – creating awareness across your enterprise.

AVOID THE BLAME GAME: A very important part of the near-miss system is learning how to encourage employees to report a near miss without feeling that they will get into trouble.

People should not be punished for reporting near-miss incidents; instead, supervisors need to encourage their employees to feel comfortable coming forward to achieve a workforce that anticipates and identifies hazards before anyone gets hurt.

NEAR MISS TAKEAWAYS FOR WORKERS

- Be aware of how your co-workers conduct themselves and work together to prevent injury.
- Take responsibility for the equipment or machinery you use. If equipment or machinery causes you problems or appears to be broken, stop using it and report it to your supervisor.
- Ensure you understand and follow all safety procedures. If you have questions talk to your supervisor.

FINAL WORD

Don’t give danger a second chance to get too close for comfort. Report all near misses immediately so they can be investigated, and hazards can be corrected.