Near Miss – Checklist



PREAMBLE

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 ensure that a similar situation in future doesn’t result 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.

If an unsafe act or condition causes a near miss and it isn’t corrected, the likelihood of a serious injury or incident occurring goes up. The danger is not from the near miss itself, but from:

- Not acting in the incident by not recognizing it as a near miss.
- Not following the correct reporting procedure.
- The relevant people not taking appropriate and timely action to remove the risk.

Hazards

- Staff not understanding what a near miss is.
- Inadequate reporting processes.
- Accepting the near miss was a lucky escape and taking no action.
- A **near miss**, “**near hit**“, “**close call**“, or “**nearly a collision**” is an unplanned event that has the potential to cause, but does not actually result in human injury, environmental or equipment damage, or an interruption to normal operation.
- OSHAdefines a near miss as an incident in which no property was damaged and no personal injury was sustained, but where, given a slight shift in time or position, damage or injury easily could have occurred. Near misses also may be referred to as close calls, near accidents, accident precursors, injury-free events and, in the case of moving objects, near collisions.

- A near miss is often an error, with harm prevented by other considerations and circumstances.[1]
- The phrase “near miss” should not be confused with the phrase “nearly a miss” which would imply a collision.

PREVENTION

Near Miss Program

Environmental, health and safety departments at five Fortune 500 companies, created the following steps for setting up a successful **Near-Miss Program:**

- Create a clear definition of a near miss.
- Make a written disclosure and report the identified near miss.
- Prioritize reports and classify information for future actions.
- Distribute information to the people involved in the near miss.
- Analyze the causes of the problem.
- Identify solutions to the problem.
- Disseminate the solutions to the people impacted.
- Resolve all actions and check any changes.

Other Steps:

- A bulletin board reporting from is one way to increase awareness of near misses.

Workers fill out a simple form which gets posted on the bulletin board for all to see.

- Bring close call reports to your regular safety meetings. Have workers talk about how to prevent future incidents.
- Explain to your workers that the terms “close call” and “near miss” are used interchangeably. Ask them for their definitions of these terms and make sure everyone understands what they mean. Likewise, explain what is meant by “safety incident” which covers injuries and close calls.

A system of reporting of the near-miss/adverse incidents should be established to achieve a culture-based safety system:

- Define expectations that all employees report unsafe conditions or perceived risks.
- Provide employees with safety training.
- Provide measurement for how near-miss reporting has improved safety performance.
- Recognize and reward employees and crews for pro-active safety actions.
- 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.
- Close call incident reporting is a very valuable tool in helping us all manage an effective safety program.
- But the vital part is to apply corrective action immediately. The only way this can be done is if a close call is reported immediately after it has occurred. This way we can learn as much as possible.

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.