Learning from Close Calls Meeting Kit

WHAT IS A NEAR MISS?

The definition of a near miss is easy to remember. It's an event where there isn't any property damage or injuries — but there could have been. Near misses happen more often than employers, and employees, think.

Human nature means we often want to forget a near miss. They are moments where we narrowly avoid injury or damage. A near miss means you've gotten lucky. Do not rely on luck when it comes to safety. A close call is a red flag — and a warning.

NEAR MISSES: IMPORTANT CHANCES FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO LEARN

A lot of people don't consider near misses worth documenting. After all, no one is hurt. If nothing was broken, then there's nothing to look in to — right? A near miss is a chance to ask an important question: "'What can we do differently next time to prevent it?'"

IDENTIFY CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Pick out all of the contributing factors. Did a machine break down or malfunction? Was the employee tired or distracted? Make a report from your findings.

PLAN TO MAKE CHANGE

A completed near miss report offers important insights. Changes can be organized into three categories:

• Safety policy changes. Are new or better safety steps needed

to help employees?

- Engineering changes. Do you need to repair or replace equipment?
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) changes. Do employees need more protection?

Change can be difficult for management. The business may require new equipment, training, or computer programs. Show employees that their reports are making a difference.

SAFETY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Investigations cannot take place if the near miss is not reported accurately. Setting up a successful safety management program to ensure near misses are reported and investigated is an important step in reducing occurrences of serious incidents.

- 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 actions and check changes.

Avoid The Blame Game

Do not assign blame for close calls. There is the need for a blame-free environment.

Questions to ask about near misses

- Were the conditions unsafe?
- Was there proper lighting?
- Was the proper equipment or tool being used for the task?
- Was the task too repetitious?

- Were there enough people for the task?
- Was the person trained in that task?
- Was the person using unsafe work practices?

FINAL WORD

A close call is a warning of an incident in the making. We need to accept these warnings and look for the causes to prevent future injuries.