



SAFETY TOOLBOX TRAINING – NEAR MISS, THE ONE THAT ALMOST HAPPENED

SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use toolbox trainings to spark safety discussions during monthly meetings with employees.
- Fax a copy of the employee sign-in sheet to Tiffany Dothard with EHSO at 404-727-5904 as a record of employee attendance.

What is a near miss? Wikipedia defines it as, “an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage but had the potential to do so.” What does this mean to you? It means that a serious accident *almost* occurred. Suppose you are in your car and you are running late for an appointment. The car is in reverse and you are about to back out of the driveway. Suddenly, in your rear view mirror you notice an unfamiliar child’s toy in the driveway. As a precaution you get out to check and find the neighbor’s toddler sitting in the driveway behind your car. What if someone trips over a pallet, but doesn’t fall? Two forklifts *almost* collide at a corner. A tool is dropped, but toes are missed...this time. All of these are examples of near misses. How many times have you shrugged off a near miss and never given it a second thought? Next time, think twice because the difference between a near miss and an accident often is a fraction of a second or an inch. Unfortunately, when it happens again that difference may not be there.

Statistics tell us that for every 330 incidents of the same type, 300 produce no injuries, 29 produce minor injuries and one produces a serious injury (these statistics vary with the job being done). The problem is, we never know which time the serious injury will occur. Probability suggests if you reduce the number of near misses, you will reduce the number of injuries that occur.



The Same Things That Cause Accidents Cause Near Misses:

- Unsafe acts - such as improper lifting; walking under an overhead load; cutting, grinding, or chipping without safety glasses; not using proper Personal Protective Equipment, etc.
- Unsafe conditions - such as poorly maintained equipment, oil or grease on floors, welding leads that have been laid in walkways, trash and boxes that have been left in hallways, etc.
- Hurrying and taking risks to complete a task or to wrap up a job at quitting time.

Report Near Misses *Before* They Become Accidents:

- Once a near miss occurs, report it immediately to your 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 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.



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Near Misses Are A Warning:

Letting a near miss go unreported provides an opportunity for a serious accident to occur. Correcting these actions or conditions will enhance the safety within your department and provide a better working environment for everyone involved. Don't let yourself or your co-workers become statistics, report near misses to your supervisor. Consider the following examples:

NEAR MISS DESCRIPTION	NEAR MISS PICTURE
Someone mops a floor and forgets to place a wet floor caution sign. This could result in an employee slipping. Always follow proper work procedures.	
You step on and break a bulb that is in a trash pile that is allowed to accumulate on the floor. The potential exists for someone to be injured from the broken glass. Always follow good housekeeping practices.	
You trip on uneven pavement outside a building. Being agile and empty handed, you regain your balance with no harm done. Uneven flooring and pavement should be reported so that repairs can be made.	
You stumble because of an uncovered hole outside of a building but you don't fall. All holes that pose a trip hazard must be covered.	

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<p>You almost trip over an electrical cord plugged into an outlet stretched across a walkway. Someone else could come along and trip over the cord causing an injury. Cords must be secured so that they don't pose trip hazards.</p>	
<p>A projectile hits your safety glasses but does not injure your eye. This suggests that work procedures and equipment should be evaluated because next time you might not be so lucky.</p>	
<p>You left the key in the lock you are using to lockout a main disconnect. You must leave the site for a moment. While you are gone, someone comes along and turns the power back on. You come back to complete the task at hand but you think to check the power before you begin. It is important to follow proper work procedures when working on or near energized equipment.</p>	
<p>Needles and sharps are continuously disposed of improperly. Luckily no one has been injured.... until now. If you notice that sharps are being disposed of improperly, report it to your supervisor.</p>	

REMEMBER: HINDSIGHT EXPLAINS THE INJURY THAT FORESIGHT WOULD HAVE PREVENTED

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are some near misses that have occurred in your area?
2. What are work-site hazards that employees face?
3. Does anyone have any suggestions that could improve safety?
4. Review a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for a chemical that is used by employees.