

Near Misses:

The Zero Cost way to collect safety information specific to YOUR workplace

What is a Near Miss?

A near miss is an opportunity to improve health and safety in a workplace based on a condition or an event with potential for more serious consequences, including:

- * Unsafe conditions
- * Unsafe behaviours
- * Minor incidents/injuries
- * Events where injury or property damage could have occurred, but did not.
- * Events where a safety barrier was challenged (ex. a worker disabling a machine guard)



If the base of the pyramid (the near misses) are reduced, so are the amount of minor, lost time, and serious or fatal injuries. They could even be **eliminated**.

Why don't my employees report near misses?

- ? Are they afraid of punishment or judgement from their peers?
 - o Employees may feel like they will be punished, especially if they are involved. Remove blame from the equation and make reporting ALL near misses a requirement.
 - o If employees feel their co-workers will judge them for reporting, they may not come forward. Ensure a culture of reporting is encouraged and rewarded, and that negative consequences from their peers, such as harassment and bullying, is not.
- ? Do they know when a near miss has occurred?
 - o Ensure workers understand all kinds of near misses. If they do not understand what to report, you may be missing out on valuable information.
- ? Do they know *how* to report a near miss?
 - o If you make the reporting process complicated, people will avoid it all together! Make sure the reporting process gets you the information you need, but does not get so cumbersome as to discourage reporting. Requirements can be as simple as: Date, Location, & General Description.
- ? Are they motivated to report a near miss?
 - o If employees don't see the benefit, they won't report. They need to see the benefit to the workplace (i.e. changes are made and things are safer), but in some cases, they also need an individual benefit. Consider incentive programs that include small rewards and recognition for reporting constructive near misses (and not just making them up to win a prize).

Should I allow anonymous reporting?

Although anonymous reporting may encourage employees to report, it sends a message that reporting near misses is bad and should be done in secret. Foster a culture of open reporting and safety and keep your reporting transparent and encouraged.

Near Miss (definition)

An unplanned event that has the potential to cause, but does not actually result in human injury, environment or equipment damage, or an interruption to normal operations.

Why Should You Manage Near Misses?

- ✓ **Zero-cost lessons** – since they don't result in harm, you can make changes without having to incur a devastating loss (either of property, or worse – of people).
- ✓ **Leading indicator** of OH&S performance
- ✓ **Prevention** – there are always more near misses than incidents, if you correct hazards that only result in near misses, think of how many injuries you are preventing!
- ✓ **Safety Culture** – encouraging near miss reporting means people are talking about safety much more often, and in a positive way. If you are only talking about safety when someone gets hurt, it shines a negative light on the term, and the concept.



Near miss reporting is NOT about assigning fault or blame – it is about finding out WHY the near miss occurred, and making changes to ensure another near miss or worse NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN.

Near Miss Management

This process is the same as any incident investigation process, but in some cases, will be much quicker, easier, and efficient, because there has been no injury or damage.

1. **Identify** – know how to spot a near miss
2. **Report** – all near misses, no matter how minor
3. **Prioritize** - As with all hazards, near misses must be prioritized. If the resulting injury could have been severe, that near miss will take precedence over one that could have only resulted in a minor injury or property damage.
4. **Investigate** – as you would any incident. Determine the root cause – WHY did this happen.
5. **Implement Corrective Actions** – based on the root cause. Answer the question: “what can we change to ensure this never happens again?”
6. **Review & Monitor** – to ensure your corrective actions have been effective and new hazards have not been created.