

TOOLBOX TOPIC

NEAR MISS - LUCKY ESCAPES



INTRODUCTION

South Australia's work health and safety laws require a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) to notify SafeWork SA of certain serious injuries or illnesses, dangerous incidents or deaths that occur at work immediately after becoming aware that it has occurred. But what about the near misses or what you might consider to be a lucky escape?

WHAT IS A NEAR MISS?

It is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage - but had the potential to do so. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented an injury, fatality or damage; in other words, a miss that was nonetheless very near.

Other terms for a near miss!

- Close call
- Wake up call
- That was a near hit
- Great catch
- Safety opportunity
- Lucky escape

Read this scenario:

(you may like to use one relevant to your business)

A worker received an electric shock on a piece of equipment he was using. He was not injured, and he did not report the incident. A few days later another worker also received a shock from the same defective equipment, and again did not report the problem. Within days a third worker also received an electrical shock which killed him.

A close call is a chance to identify a hazard and correct it before someone is seriously injured or killed.

QUESTIONS TO GENERATE DISCUSSION

Who has a real life story of a near miss, or they just felt lucky they were not injured at work.

DATE:

/ /

**SUPERVISOR/
MANAGER:**

EMPLOYEE NAMES:

What type of things do you do over and over again . . . taking a chance that “it won’t happen to you”? Do you:

- Reach into moving equipment?
- Not wear specific PPE for the task?
- Not lockout equipment before servicing?
- Drive a forklift with your view obstructed?
- Keep your safety glasses on your head rather than your eyes?
- Take shortcuts?
- Use broken tools?
- Work on live electrical circuits without protection?
- Use faulty extension cords?
- Get up on an unguarded platform without fall protection?
- Remove machine guards or tape up safety limit switches?

Think about it. Each of those things has led to the death of someone in the past year at their workplace. Until you make the decision to eliminate those at-risk behaviors that you do, you are playing roulette with your limbs, your life, and maybe even a coworker’s life.

How do you deal with a “Near Misses”

Here is a list of questions to ask your staff to reflect upon.

- What’s your attitude toward a near miss?
- Do you feel momentarily relieved that what happened wasn’t any worse?
- Do you just return to your routine after the near miss occurs?
- Do you simply tell yourself that you should be more careful next time?

Tell Employees: What is the procedure to report a near miss?

Talk about your procedure to report near misses.

CONCLUSION

A close call is a call to action.

Close calls in the workplace give us an opportunity to recognise that something is wrong and to do something about it before someone gets hurt.

Be sure to report near misses.