

ACCIDENTS – NEAR MISSES

Normally, when people have a “close call” they think, “Whew! I got lucky that time!” and then shrug it off and move on. On a construction site, this line of thinking can have potentially lethal consequences. The difference between life and death could be a mere fraction of a second or an inch, and the next time it happens, you may not be so lucky.

Studies have shown that on average, for every 330 incidents in a given category, 300 don’t result in injuries, 29 result in minor injuries, and 1 will result in a major injury. The trouble is, no one can predict when or where that one major injury might occur. And the sad fact is, many accidents can be prevented with just a little awareness and some preventative measures. Accidents happen for a reason, and near misses should be taken as a warning of a potentially bigger problem.

Let’s examine an example:

As you are walking down a flight of stairs, your foot slips, causing you to almost fall over; however, being nimble and quick to recover, you regain your footing and emerge unharmed. You chalk it up to your own clumsiness and proceed, not giving it a second thought.

Mere minutes later, one of your co-worker walks down the same flight of stairs, also slipping in the same spot – however, being slightly older than you and not quite as quick to respond, he takes a moment to right himself and saves himself injury by catching onto a railing.

Now, another co-worker comes down the stairway, holding a heavy load. He also slips in the same spot that you and your first co-worker did, only because of the heavy load he is carrying, he is unable to regain his balance. He slips, and breaks his leg. Had you or your first co-worker stopped to examine the stairs, you would have seen the spilled grease on the steps, causing all of you to slip. Something as simple as checking and cleaning up the small spill would have saved the second co-worker a broken leg.

Taking a few moments after a near miss to ask yourself “Why?” and investigating the cause may save you and your co-workers a lot of pain and grief. When evaluating a situation, ask yourself questions such as, “Why did the object fall?”, “Is something loose?”, “Am I not wearing the correct equipment?”, “Am I using the incorrect sized tool for this job?” and other questions.

Never underestimate the small details or adopt the attitude that a miss was just a lucky break for you. For someone else, that near miss might be right on target.

How this topic applies to this job: _____

Date: _____ Jobsite/Project #: _____

Supervisor/Foreman (print name): _____ Signature: _____

Attendees: Print Name/Signature (use back if necessary):

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____