



## The Importance of Near Misses



**Most people never give one thought to the real dangers lurking at their job.** Moreover, the more severe the injury, the more attention that it commands. Therefore, the idea of a “near miss” can get lost in the shuffle. However, they are absolutely critical in identifying trends in the workplace. Near misses are defined as an event where an accident or injury almost takes place, but does not. For example, if your foot slipped on a liquid substance left on the floor and you caught yourself before falling to the floor, that would clearly be a near miss.

### Track the Category

Every company will need to make their own list of categories based on the specifics of their workplace. This allows you to spot trends more quickly so you can address the root cause of the problem.

Some examples of near miss categories might be:



Falling  
Objects



Spills



Slips, Trips  
and Falls



Fire and  
Electrical





## Common Locations

**Always track the physical location of the incident.**

Whenever someone reports a near miss, make sure you identify exactly where in the facility it takes place. This will help you to spot trends and reduce their severity. Doing this will help improve the overall safety of your facility.



## Reporting Made Simple

**You can't properly measure near misses if people aren't reporting them.**

All too many times, employees look at near misses as unimportant, and they don't want to take the time to fill out the paperwork. When this happens, it can be very hard to track accurate numbers.

Many facilities have found that using a simple computer program to help document near misses is a great way to streamline the process. This will also make it easier for most employees to report the incident right away so they can get back to their jobs.



## Supportive Reporting

**Oftentimes employees are concerned that they will get in trouble for reporting an incident, making near miss reporting even more of a "miss".**

If you want to properly measure your near misses, you need to make sure that everyone is completely comfortable reporting them. It should be very clear to all employees that there is no penalty for reporting a near miss and make sure they have the time needed to fill out the paperwork.



## Visual Reminders Are Effective

Put up signs that tell people that they should report any incident where someone could have potentially been hurt.

Be sure to include simple instructions on how to do this and who they can contact if they have questions or concerns.



## Near Miss Reports Should be Handled As Soon As Possible

**When a report of a near miss comes in that has some type of actionable information, make sure you act on it publicly.**

For example, if you get a report that high-lows in the facility are turning down a particular aisle and coming very close to bumping the shelving, that is a near miss.

When the report comes in, you should immediately begin looking into the cause of the problem. Asking the drivers and others who work in the area why this is occurring. If the drivers report that it is difficult to see where the aisle markings are because of the lighting, take action to fix it. You can either add additional lighting to the area, or put down reflective floor marking tape so drivers can easily see where they are supposed to turn.

When done, let everyone know that this potentially dangerous situation was resolved thanks to the report from a specific employee. This will let everyone know that their reports are looked at and action is taken to keep them safer.

When people are confident that reporting near misses is not just a waste of time, they are much more likely to take the time to do the necessary paperwork to report these incidents in the future.

## Continuous Improvement



Whether you have an official process in place or you just keep an eye out for areas of concern, **you'll find that you can dramatically improve your near miss measurement results by making continuous changes and improvements.**

Remaining Proactive in your "Near Miss" reporting can help your company identify trends, before they become an issue.