

WEEKLY TOOLBOX TALK: CLOSE CALLS/NEAR MISSES ARE WAKE-UP CALLS

Posted by Jorge Vazquez on October 26, 2015



Volume XXV

Number 44

November 02, 2015

Mandatory Topic:

Notice to Supervisors: Read and be prepared to answer questions. Every employee should know to report near misses to their immediate supervisor.

At the Marek Family of Companies we expect everyone to report unsafe conditions and actions, as stated in PROJECT SAFE. A near miss is always considered an unsafe condition that needs immediate correction. Close calls or near misses are all too common in the workplace. Why talk about incidents that didn't happen? The following story might make it a little easier to understand a close call:

You are walking at your job site. You start to go down some stairs and you lean on the guardrail and it suddenly moves causing you to almost fall.

Since you didn't fall, you continue on your way without taking any action.

Your work partner is coming behind you and is trying to catch up. Unfortunately he is carrying a bucket. He leans on the rail, it moves again and he isn't as lucky as you are and falls down the stairs. How could you have prevented this?

The sequence of events that leads to an accident with injuries is like a series of errors that fall onto one another like dominoes.

The near miss incident is simply the same sequence of events with one of the dominoes missing and no one gets hurt - some people call it 'good luck.'

Experience has proven that if the "dominoes" that cause accidents are not removed, the potential for an accident still exists - in this case a loose guardrail on a heavily trafficked stairwell. If the danger is serious enough, then even a fatality may occur.

Why are close call incidents not reported? Typical reasons are fear of reprimand or repercussions, red tape, not being aware of their importance in controlling future accidents, embarrassment, the spoiling of a safety or production record or lack of supervisor response when similar issues have already been brought up to management.

These examples should not keep you from protecting yourself or your co-workers from being injured from a potentially dangerous situation or condition.

If you keep silent about a close call - you may have to deal with it by trying to explain how a co-worker ends up in the hospital because of a hazard that you knew existed but failed to report or fix because you had other 'priorities.'

Reporting near misses is a very valuable tool in helping us all manage an effective safety program. The vital part is to apply corrective action immediately - something every employee can help the job accomplish.

Tags:

safety

Toolbox Talk:

Near Miss Reporting

Accident Prevention