

## ***Near-Misses: Your KEY to Risk Prevention***

Believe it or not, most accidents can be predicted by near-misses. Near-miss incidents often precede loss producing events but may be overlooked as there was no harm, injury, damage or loss caused by the event. When incidents like these happen, most employees feel relieved and then simply forget about them. According to the National Safety Council (NSC), 75% of all accidents are preceded by one or more near-misses. NSC adds that “History has shown repeatedly that most loss-producing events, both serious and catastrophic, were preceded by warnings or near-miss incidents.” Therefore, by recognizing and encouraging the reporting of near-miss incidents, your organization can capture previously lost opportunities to improve worker safety and enhance your safety culture.

To change your safety culture from operating only reactively, consider implementing a Near-Miss Reporting Program. Follow these best practices for seamless inclusion into your departmental practices:

- Create a policy and procedure that is communicated to all employees with the backing of senior management.
- Promote a culture of reporting with the support and help of all managers and supervisors.
- Educate employees on the reason why near-miss reporting is a necessity, the important role near-miss accidents play, and the process for reporting.
- Include training for new employees as part of their orientation.
- Ensure that the near-miss reporting process is easy to understand and use.
- Reinforce with employees that near-miss reporting is non-punitive and can be done anonymously.
- Consider incentives that encourage reporting
- To prevent future incidents, brainstorm with everyone for corrective actions, such as improved safety systems, hazard control, risk reduction, and lessons learned.
- Use the near-miss reporting as a leading indicator and report back to the organization the positive steps to improve workplace safety.

Remember, you can't fix what you don't know about! Continually encourage employees to treat near-miss incidents the same way they treat accidents. This is the essential first step for finding root causes, taking corrective action, and training employees before the real accident occurs.

Need help getting started? Attached is a model policy and roll-call training on near-miss reporting.