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Use Near Misses to Create a Safer Workplace

Understanding the circumstances surrounding a near miss can be valuable to employers. But according to an article in the American Society of Safety engineers (ASSE) journal, Professional Safety, many organizations and employees resist reporting near misses.

Near-Miss Reporting: A Missing Link in Safety Culture looks at the reasons for this resistance and provides ways to overcome it. Author Mike Williamsen considers near misses to be an opportunity for personal risk assessment and adds, "We want to develop a culture that doesn't wait until someone is injured, but identifies the risk before it happens."

How do you overcome hesitancy to reporting near misses? Williamsen offers the following tips:

- Clarify the expectation that employees report unsafe conditions or risks
- Provide employees with safety training
- Offer strategies to measure how near-miss reporting improves safety performance.
- Recognize and reward employees for proactive safety engagement.

Researchers have found that for every lost-time injury more than 3 days in length, there were 189 non-injury cases. You just can't afford to ignore near misses!

A Tale of our accidents

The following is a list of reportable workers comp accidents that have occurred since our last newsletter.

Utah: USANA- Employee was working outdoors in 103° weather and did not drink enough water and got heat exhaustion.

Florida: Maxwell King Center - Employee was lifting boxes improperly which resulted in a possible hernia.

OCCC - Employee was riding on the back of a three wheeled cart being pushed into an elevator where another cart was already in. His feet were crushed between the two carts. It has been over eight weeks and the employee remains off work.

Arizona: TCC - While employee was lifting folding bleachers into the upright position their foot slid and their ankle got smashed between the seat and the bleacher.

I have attached a copy of our supervisors' hazard report. This should be available at all calls. If any sign of a hazard is present; please fill this out and return it to us. We will then have record of the hazard and can help take measures with the venue if needed to correct the hazard.

Younger Workers and the Mistakes They Make

By Safety Management Group

We all remember what it felt like to enter the workforce, especially the first time we landed a “real” job. We were handling serious work and earning serious money for it. We were strong, energetic, eager, and much smarter than those “old guys” around us - or so we thought.

Now that we’re one of the “old guys” (or gals) on the job, we find ourselves working with newcomers to our workplaces. While we appreciate their energy and eagerness, we also see that familiar delusion that they’re smarter than everyone they encounter. However, we know something they don’t, and that’s the fact that it’s not unusual for younger workers to be injured on the job during their first few months of work. As their supervisors and co-workers we bear responsibility for making sure that they don’t become a statistic. We need to help them understand the safety culture, and encourage them to take responsibility for their own safety.

Why are younger workers more prone to workplace injuries or illnesses? There are several factors, but one that may surprise you is their nervousness about the job. They want to make a good impression, and may believe that employers are more impressed by people who work faster and harder than by people who work smarter.

Younger workers also lack the hard-earned knowledge that keeps their older counterparts healthy. Just as important, newer workers may be hesitant to ask questions or raise concerns.

In younger years people tend to believe that they know more than they actually do. Often we learn best when we make mistakes, but mistakes on a jobsite can cause serious injuries and damage.

Please follow these steps when you recognize a workplace safety issue:

1. Make sure that everyone else in the workplace is aware of the problem.
2. Notify your supervisor/steward
3. File a hazard report with the supervisor/steward

From there the union can follow up with us with the hazard report.

