Toolbox Talk on Reporting Near Misses

What is a Near Miss?

“Any event or situation that, whilst not immediately causing harm, has the potential to adversely impact on health & safety or the environment”

Please don’t get hung up on the definition of a near miss if in doubt report the incident or situation to your site management team or Line Manager so improvements can be made immediately to prevent a similar incident.

Events or situations that constitute as near miss and should be reported include:

1. During lifting operations metal chains are slung on metal scaffold poles, during the actual lift nothing falls, but slippage of the scaffold is observed.
2. Temporary works that does not comply with the design and / or that could lead to collapse or failure. With the potential for example of a person being injured by a flying object or loss of concrete to a water course or the need for expensive rework.
3. A container of fuel or chemical is left in unsafe manner near to a water course or a road gully providing a potential pollution incident.
4. An extension lead connected to a projector from a wall socket in not covered to prevent a trip hazard.

Leaning back on chair                  Falls back but holds on                   Falls off chair and injures himself

Near Miss    Near Miss Again!  Accident (Injury)

Why Report Near Misses?

• Near misses are a warning that something is not working and enables us to learn lessons before a serious incident occurs, maybe involving you or a working colleague.
• It helps management to find trends and faults within the system and introduce effective control measures.
• Near miss reports give us the opportunity to work at the bottom of the triangle (see diagram on the left), which is always better as it does not involve injuries and gives us more information to identify trends than those identified from accidents.
• By reporting near misses and learning from them, everyone at Optimise will benefit from working in a safer environment.
How can a near miss be reported?

- Tell your Site Agent / Supervisor/Line Manager immediately, this is the best way of reporting near misses as it allows an unsafe way of working to be quickly stopped and put right and allows a proper investigation into the root causes to be carried out.

- Inform the person delivering your daily briefing or either your Safety Coach (where applicable) or your Health & Safety or Environmental Advisor or even a Director

- Fill ‘Near Miss Report Card’. Normally the cards can be found in canteens, receptions, offices or your work vehicle. This card can be filled in anonymously giving details of any near misses to be reported or any hazards that the Site Management need to be aware of. The card can be left in the box provided at your work location or can be sent directly to Nick Gilbert (HSEQ Manager) Basement Building, Maple Lodge STW, Denham Way, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 9SQ.

Please do report the issue directly to your supervisor where possible and then record the details on the near miss card.

What Happens when I report a near miss?

When your near miss is reported it should be investigated on site or in the office to ascertain the root cause (What is the problem? Why did it happen? What will be done to prevent it?) and to ensure that adequate control measures are in place on site or in the office to prevent a reoccurrence. More serious near misses (for example RIDDOR reportable dangerous occurrences) should be notified immediately to the Health & Safety or Environmental Advisor supporting your working area to enable a more rigorous investigation to take place.

The site or office management will at the end of the month report the number and type of near misses that have been reported on site or in the office. This information is collated and a report produced for the review by various parties within your working zone and across Optimise.

Therefore by reporting near misses Optimise will be able to reduce accidents by

1. Putting control measures in place locally and if needed across all Optimise activities to ensure that individual near misses are not repeated.
2. By interpreting trends coming from our near miss reports we can look at Optimise performance on issues and put in place control measures or introduce initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness and reduce the likelihood of future trends.

Your near miss is an important learning opportunity not only for you individually but for your site/office and the whole of Optimise. Remember no action will be taken against you for reporting near misses, in fact Optimise management actively encourage near miss reporting.

You will also start to see feedback on trends posted on notice boards and individuals who raise reports should be given individual feedback from their supervisors on the progress or outcome. This is obviously dependant on whether the report was given anonymously or not.

Conclusion

Optimise is totally committed to providing an accident & incident free working environment; however we require your help to achieve this by reporting all near misses. Remember if you don’t report it, we can not learn from it!