MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™ EXTENSION

MSU DAWG TRACKS

Have you ever said, "Whew, That Was Close!" while watching somebody else at work? Or have you ever said that in your head to yourself?

A near miss is defined as an incident in which no property was damaged and no personal injury was sustained, but where, given a slight shift in time or position, damage or injury easily could have occurred, according to OSHA. It could include things like:

- Unsafe conditions.
- Unsafe behavior, such as a worker modifying personal protection equipment for comfort.
- Minor injuries, such as a scrape that had potential to be more serious, such as an amputation.
- Events where property damage could have resulted but didn't.
- Events where a safety barrier was challenged, such as a worker bypassing a machine guard.
- Events where potential environmental damage could have resulted but didn't.

History has repeatedly shown that most loss producing incidents, both serious and catastrophic, were preceded by near miss events. This has been proven in many studies, including one by Frank Bird where he examined 1,753,498 accidents reported by 297 companies across 21 industries. Together the companies employed 1.75 million employees accounting for 3 billion hours of work-accident exposure.

Based on extensive interviews and accident data, the 1-10-30-600 triangle was developed.

Bird's analysis found that for every 1 reported major injury (resulting in fatality, disability, lost time or medical treatment) 9.8 reported minor injuries (requiring first aid), 30.2 property damage accidents and 600 near miss incidents had occurred.

What is done after a near miss is the important part. Single, big accidents seem to always get a reaction and the most attention. But becoming pro-active after each near miss is what will result in fewer of the serious accidents.

✓ Encourage workers to tell their near miss stories, without a fear of repercussions.

✓ Reward or openly praise workers who point out safety issues and encourage them to help with a solution.

✓ Identify root causes of near miss incidents and correct small issues before they become big problems.

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