



The Importance of Reporting Near Misses

Near misses in the workplace are cases where an injury, accident or other damage had the potential to occur, but didn't. Reporting them can help prevent future accidents.

Lightning Safety Tips for Outdoor Workers

Lightning is a common hazard for outdoor workers. Read on to learn how to protect yourself during severe weather.

A monthly safety newsletter from

The Importance of Reporting Near Misses

Near misses in the workplace are cases where an injury, accident, illness or other damage had the potential to occur, but didn't.

Examples of these occurrences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Employees forgetting to wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Employees ignoring procedures or work practices
- A slip or fall that doesn't result in an injury
- Tools or other items dropping from height without striking a worker
- Nearly striking pipes or power lines during drilling procedures

When near misses like the ones listed above occur, reporting them to your employer can go a long way in preventing future incidents. Despite this fact, near misses are often dismissed as lucky breaks and go unaddressed.

As an employee, it's your job to help bring serious incidents—near misses or otherwise—to the attention of your employer in order to ensure the health and safety of yourself and your peers. Doing so provides three major benefits:

1. It helps capture real safety data that your employer can use to track trends and common incidents.
2. It helps prevent future injuries or deaths from occurring.
3. It promotes a culture of safety in the workplace, helping to improve hazardous conditions instantaneously.

When near misses occur, be sure to follow your employer's policy about reporting them. If no such policy is in place, encourage your employer to establish one.

A near miss reporting program should involve all workers, be easy to understand and should not involve reprimanding workers as the result of an accident.

Keeping all of these tips in mind can allow you as an employee to help shape the overall safety of your workplace for the better.

For more health and safety tips, contact Baldwin Krystyn Sherman Partners today.

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Lightning Safety Tips for Outdoor Workers

Lightning, which is most common during the summer months, poses a serious risk to workers—especially those who work outside.

In the event of a thunderstorm, you should take shelter immediately. However, if you are trapped outside during a storm, take the following precautions:

1. Stay off of and away from tall or large objects, such as rooftops, trees, utility poles, fences, scaffolding, ladders and other large equipment.
2. Avoid being the tallest object in an open area. Seek shelter in low-lying areas and do not hold objects that can make you a target for lightning, such as umbrellas.
3. Stay away from bodies of water. When lightning strikes water, it can travel a significant distance from its initial point of contact.
4. Avoid parking under tall objects or getting out of the vehicle near downed power lines if you are taking shelter in a vehicle.

In the event that you or another employee has been struck by lightning, it's critical that you seek medical assistance immediately.

Remember that individuals who have been struck by lightning **do not** carry an electrical charge and **can** be touched. If the victim's heart has stopped or if he or she has stopped breathing, administer CPR as soon as possible.

For further protection, it's critical to keep in mind some common myths about lightning. For instance, rubber tires on cars don't insulate you from the ground. Rather, it is the metal roof and sides that protect you from a strike. As such, you should never lean on the doors of a vehicle during a storm.

In addition, it is a commonly held belief that lightning does not strike twice in the same place. In actuality, the opposite is true, and lightning often strikes the same object repeatedly, especially if it is tall and isolated.

Following these safety tips and keeping the above myths in mind will ensure that you are safe from lightning whenever you work outside.



Safety in NUMBERS 123

What to do if you are caught outside during a lightning storm:

- 1 Avoid tall objects like trees and utility poles.



- 2 Seek shelter in low-lying areas.



- 3 Avoid bodies of water.



- 4 Avoid downed power lines.



Real-life Case Study

Nathan is a shop worker for a Minnesota-based company specializing in custom furniture. Over the past few months, shop upkeep had become neglected and lumber and other tools were frequently being left in walkways.

It became such a problem that a number of workers would often trip over discarded wood and other items, resulting in near falls and accidents.

Instead of sitting idly by and chalking these incidents up to close calls, Nathan informed his boss of the shop conditions.

As a result, a stricter housekeeping program was implemented, and tripping hazards were removed from areas with heavy foot traffic.

As an added benefit, more shop employees have become comfortable with the concept of reporting near misses to their boss in order to further improve the safety of the workplace.

The shop is currently in the process of creating a formalized near miss reporting program that will make it even easier to anonymously submit potential hazards.