

The Importance of Reporting Near Misses

WHAT IS A NEAR MISS?

A **near miss** is an event where no injury, illness, or damage occurred, but it had the potential to happen.

WHY IS REPORTING NEAR MISSES IMPORTANT?

1. Prevents Serious Incidents.

Near misses are early warning signs. Addressing them in time can prevent serious injuries or even fatalities.

2. Identifies Hidden Hazards.

Many risks remain unnoticed until something almost goes wrong. Reporting helps reveal unsafe conditions, behaviors, or processes.

3. Improves Safety Systems and Processes.

Analyzing near misses allows organizations to fix root causes—not just symptoms—leading to stronger procedures, better equipment design, and safer workflows.

Analyzing near misses helps identify root causes and fix problems permanently “not just temporarily”

4. Builds and Strengthens Safety Culture.

Encouraging open reporting builds trust. Employees feel safe to speak up, and safety becomes a shared priority rather than a blame issue.

Trust and engagement increase across the organization.

5. Reduces Costs and Downtime.

Preventing incidents avoids medical costs, equipment damage, production delays, and penalties.

COMMON BARRIERS TO REPORTING NEAR MISSES

- Fear of blame or discipline
- Belief that “nothing happened, so it’s not important”
- Lack of time or unclear reporting processes

Removing these barriers is critical to improving safety performance.

WHAT MAKES NEAR MISS REPORTING EFFECTIVE?

- Simple and accessible reporting methods
- No-blame approach focused on learning and communication on all company levels
- Timely follow-up and corrective actions
- Clear feedback so employees see results of their reporting

KEY MESSAGE

Every near miss is a **valuable learning opportunity**.

Ignoring it means missing the chance to prevent future incidents.

By acting early, we protect people, improve processes, and ensure everyone goes home safely.

From Near Miss to Lesson Learned: Pipe Blasting Coating

Every near miss is a learning opportunity. Consider this actual event from a pipe blasting and coating task:

Situation:

An operator attempted to use a sandblasting nozzle while working from a short ladder.

Hazard:

The worker did not anticipate the powerful recoil force (inertia) generated when the nozzle activated.

Outcome:

Fortunately, no injuries occurred and no equipment was damaged.

Action:

The incident was immediately reported, recorded, and targeted safety training was implemented.

Below is an illustration of an operator attempting to use a sandblasting nozzle while on a ladder.

