**TOOLBOX TALK - Five Ways to Improve Near Miss Reporting**

Whether you’re implementing a near-miss reporting system or your current system isn’t producing the results you want, here are five suggestions for encouraging workers to report minor incidents and near misses.

**1. Explain the process to all employees**

Employees are more willing to cooperate when they know all of the specifics:

* Why is the company adopting a near-miss reporting system?
* How will the information be used?
* What’s in it for them?
* Where do they access the card or electronic form?
* How should they fill it out?
* What kind of feedback will they receive afterward?

Employees also need to know where to turn them in. Some companies prefer a drop box, and others want them to be handed to a joint health and safety committee representative, safety committee team member or a supervisor. Whatever collection system you use, it should be easily accessible and communicated to every worker.

**2. Analyze and act on the data**

Each report should be read immediately, and its data entered into a spreadsheet or other data collection system for later analysis. Where the severity of a near miss is high and it’s probable that the same thing could happen to another employee, immediate corrective action should be taken.

Corrective action should not be punitive or near-miss reports can quickly dry up. Typically, actions resulting from near miss reports range from an engineering control (a better cut-off switch or better machine guarding) or an administrative control (requiring that another person be present when the task is performed).

**3. Communicate the results to employees at all levels of the organization**

Employees can learn from the experience of others through a safety alert posted on a bulletin board or in a toolbox talk. Supervisors and trainers should be advised of trends that appear in near miss reports so they can address recurring issues in safety meetings or toolbox talks. The safety department can also communicate with sister companies about incidents that are serious and relevant to their operations.

**4. Integrate other training and techniques into the card or form you use**

When implemented correctly, near-miss reporting can improve your ability to identify gaps in your safety system and training schedule before an injury or property damage occurs. Adding a near miss reporting system to what you are already doing for accident/incident investigation will help you learn from incidents where no one was hurt, or the injuries were very minimal. You’ll then be able to act and reduce the risk of injuries in the future.

**5. Using initiatives**

Workers may not want to report near misses for fear of punishment or getting a work colleague into trouble. Explain to them that the company regards near miss reporting as a good thing because the next incident could be a serious accident. Introduce an incentive scheme i.e. lunch vouchers, a certificate, a positive letter from the boss etc.