



Handling Near Misses

It is important to report near misses for safe workplace practices to help identify potential injury hazards before they result in an actual injury. We refer to this in the risk management field as proactive monitoring. Many times, injury prevention is undertaken only after an incident has occurred where an employee was injured. For example, a slip and fall on ice leads to an injury, and the questionable icy condition is then addressed, post-accident. A person might slip but not fall on the ice, however, they still need to report the unsafe condition so it can be proactively corrected to avoid an injury. Unfortunately, all too often these near miss incidents do not get properly reported. If you are involved in a near miss incident, follow your school reporting procedures for unsafe conditions and follow up with key school personnel to confirm compliance.

Identifying Hazards

Near misses can indicate a one-time hazard, weaknesses in risk management programs, or undiscovered safety concerns. By reporting, correcting, and analyzing near misses, school districts can determine what went wrong and put measures in place to prevent them from happening again. Corrective measures might include additional staff training, process updates, improved equipment maintenance, or facility improvements.

Reporting a Near Miss

School personnel should be trained on how to report near misses. This will include an incident report form which is then investigated by management. It is vital to immediately report a near miss to the administration, or other key school staff, to ensure they can take necessary steps to correct or control the hazard. Reporting right away helps to keep other employees safe and makes management quickly aware of potential issues. In some situations, an employee may need to correct the hazard themselves, right away. For example, an employee may need to remove an extension cord in a walkway that they tripped over. It may also be necessary to secure the area and protect others from the hazard.



Near Miss Follow-Up

Key school personnel alerted to the hazard can restrict the area from additional staff exposure, identify the cause of the hazard, and have it corrected. Correcting the hazard is essential, but it is equally important to identify the cause and address it.

Why are near misses important to report?

- Identify and eliminate or control hazards
- Improved risk reduction efforts, reducing the likelihood of workplace injuries
- Enhanced communication provides a safer workplace
- Improves internal records for routine review
- Employees feel valued and supported, increasing worker morale
- Reduces costs associated with employee injuries
- Improves safety culture

