

Employee Incident Reporting

A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

DURING THE MEETING

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

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NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:

Use your own examples wherever possible in the talk that follows.

An incident is similar to an accident except that it does not necessarily result in injury or damage. No matter how trivial they are, incidents should be reported to supervision just as accidents are. Employees should be encouraged and reminded periodically to report incidents that occur, so conclusions can be drawn about preventing a recurrence resulting in a serious injury. Incidents are commonly called near misses.

NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:

Ask the question at the top of each section of the group and encourage discussion before suggesting the alternatives given here.

Why should employees report incidents?

Nothing is learned from unreported incidents. Hazards, causes and contributing circumstances are lost if not reported. Employees who don't take the time to report near misses they are involved in may not learn from them. The fact that many incidents come within inches of being disabling injury accidents makes failing to report them all the more serious.

When incidents are not reported, their causes usually go uncorrected. That means they may happen again, perhaps producing tomorrow's disabling injury or fatality. This can be illustrated by the case of the employee who slipped on a floor made slippery by a small leak in a hydraulic line. The employee did not suffer an injury. Two days later, the line was still leaking. Another employee slipped on the liquid and fell and broke her leg. The first employee volunteered his experience to the company investigating the accident. Had the worker reported his own experience promptly, the chances are that the defective hydraulic line would have been corrected before the accident happened.

Why don't workers report incidents?

- Fear of the supervisor's disapproval.
- Not wanting to lose time from the job on piece-work assignments.
- Not wanting the incident on their work records.
- Not wanting to be embarrassed by co-worker ridicule or sarcasm.
- Reluctance to spoil the unit's safety record.

- Dislike for the red tape involved.
- Failure to understand why incident should be reported.
- Not recognizing the damage that could result.
- Not wanting to be the subject of an incident investigation.

What causes the incident/near miss?

- What are the circumstances surrounding the near miss?
- Is there a safety rule covering the situation?
- Did the almost-victim know the rule?

Were any safety devices, clothing or equipment used improperly or not used at all when they were called for?

- Have there been other near-misses of the same type?
- Was the employee aware of the hazard?
- Did the employee know the safe procedure?
- The answers to these questions should be included in the incident report.

They will suggest ways to prevent a recurrence. They may suggest some substitutions--a protective device more certain than luck, for instance.

NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:

Bring out incidents or near misses that you have experienced or know of, or ask the group for some of their experiences.