

Are You Safe or Just Lucky?

Introduction:

How often have you exclaimed, “Wow, that was a close call!” or someone has said to you, “You were just lucky!”? A “close call” incident is referred to as a near miss. Can you think of an example of when you or a coworker had a near miss? Did you feel as if you had “luck” on your side?

OSHA defines a near miss as an “unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage – but had the potential to do so.” The difference between a near miss and an accident is often a matter of inches or seconds.

Discussion Points:

- An incident where you had “luck” on your side
- The difference between a near miss and an accident
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Accidents happen every day in the workplace
- Safety is not a matter of luck

Discussion:

When a coworker experiences an accident but escapes serious injury, others will often say, “That guy was lucky! Just a couple of seconds later and he could have been seriously injured.”

In an incident that involved a forklift, the operator felt extreme pressure to complete the job before the end of the shift. As he continued to work at a steady pace, driving, and concentrating on finishing the task, he failed to pay attention to his surroundings and didn't see the person walking in the path of travel.

We all make mistakes and errors in judgment; having a near miss incident could be a matter of losing focus. We talked about “four seconds to safety” in a previous Toolbox Talk. Sometimes, all it takes is pausing and refocusing before taking the next step to avoid an accident.

Many people can give an example of how they were involved in a near miss incident while on the job, and they will state that “they had luck on their side.”

It's important to understand that accidents happen every day in the workplace. They can happen at any time and in any department. Safety is not a matter of luck. Having a good Safety Program and providing a safe work environment is vital. When employees are properly trained, equipment is inspected and properly maintained, personal protective equipment is properly used, and all employees work together, then everyone should stay safe. It's better to rely on safety than to hope for luck.

As always, stay safe out there!



December 21, 2020