

Background note: Near Misses

1. Introduction.

1.1 We had 6 Near Miss/Non-Reportable Dangerous Occurrence's reports in 2021 - 2022, which we feel is low therefore we are trying to encourage staff to report Near Misses across the organisation.

2. Near-miss reporting – why it's important.

2.1 Hazards which cause accidents do not always result in injury as the person involved may take action to save themselves or simply be lucky. A common example might be a spillage which is not quickly mopped up because the employee who observes it sees no immediate risk and decides to complete another task first. If, before it is dealt with, another person slips on it, but steadies themselves then no harm is done. This makes it appear as if the hazard was inconsequential, when in fact the opposite is true, and the next person to come by might not be so lucky.

3. Reporting a near-miss is important

3.1 Every workplace has its own hazards and near-misses can happen in any of them. While it is vital that action is taken if a hazard causes an injury, it is far better to take action before someone is injured, and this is where the reporting of a near-miss comes in.

3.2 The HSE believes that on average there are ninety near misses for every injury. If these near misses are reported that one injury may be avoided.

4. How to report a near-miss

4.1 All staff should understand that they need to report a near-miss just as they would report an actual accident, and senior management must make the reporting procedures clear. As with an accident, there are details which should be included in the report to enable effective action to be taken.

- Time and date of the incident
- Where the incident took place
- The type of incident, for example, slip, fall, collision
- The work activities taking place before the incident
- Information on what happened
- Details of the person or people involved

5. Why near-misses aren't reported

5.1 It may seem obvious that to report a near-miss could save someone being injured in the future, yet frequently near-misses go unreported. This may be because employees are simply unaware that they should report a near-miss or

be unclear about the procedures. However, other reasons why the near misses go unreported include:

- Being afraid of being reprimanded for the near-miss or getting a colleague into trouble
- Too much paperwork involved in accident reporting
- Reporting will blot a clean incident record and there may be rewards on offer for maintaining it
- The incident seems funny and not serious
- A poor experience the previous time they attempted to report an incident

5.2 It is important to continue to create a workplace culture where employees feel comfortable reporting near-misses and the incident is treated as a learning experience, exposing some of the less obvious hazards, without negative consequences.