

# gibca SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS



## Near Misses are Warnings

A “near miss” is an unplanned incident/event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage, but had the potential to do so. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented an injury, fatality, or damage.

### Consider the following examples of near misses:

- You trip over an electrical cord plugged into an outlet across a walkway, but don't fall.
- You drop a heavy object, but missed your toes (this time).
- While working on a piece of equipment, you receive a shock, but are not injured.
- A hammer falls from workers above, barely missing you.
- You stepped into a machine's path, but the machine just missed you.

Near miss incidents are most commonly caused by human error. Faulty processes or systems, however, should also be the focus of improvement.

### Two Main Causes of Near Misses

- **Unsafe Acts:** Improper lifting, walking under an overhead load, not using proper Personal Protective Equipment, or risky behavior.
- **Unsafe Conditions:** Poorly maintained equipment, oil or grease on floors, poor lighting, welding leads laid in walkways, or trash and boxes left in hallways.

### Near Misses are Warnings: Report Them

Report near misses: like incidents that result in injuries, they should be investigated and any issues corrected. Letting a near miss go unreported provides opportunity for another incident to occur. Correcting these actions or conditions will enhance the safety of the job site.

The difference between a near miss and an injury is often a fraction of a second, or an inch or two. Should the incident happen again, that difference may not be there.