



GBCA SAFETY TOOLBOX TALK

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.

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

Near miss incidents are most commonly caused by human error. Faulty processes or systems, however, should also be examined when near misses occur.

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.

Now Ask Yourselves This:

Did you recently have a “near miss” on this job site? What could have been done to prevent that hazard from being there in the first place?