

'NEAR MISS' Guidance

Definition

There are several different definitions of the term 'Near Miss'.

For the purposes of managing Health & Safety across CMBC the definition that best describes a 'Near Miss' is: -

'A near miss is an event or situation that could have resulted in injury, damage or loss but did not do so due to chance, corrective action and/or timely intervention'.

To help with the understanding of this definition and where it may apply in CMBC activities involving employees, visitors, contractors, public etc. a number of examples have been prepared and are shown in appendix 1.

Why Near Miss reporting matters

In simple terms, all near miss events are accidents waiting to happen. If you consider the term '**Near Miss**' and think '**Near Accident**' instead, then it becomes clearer how important reporting is.

We want to prevent accidents from occurring and a Near Miss report gives managers and supervisors the opportunity to investigate the circumstances and take prompt remedial action.

There have been various studies into the relationship between instances of Near Misses and major injuries. One such study was completed by Frank Bird in 1969 and is shown in illustration 1

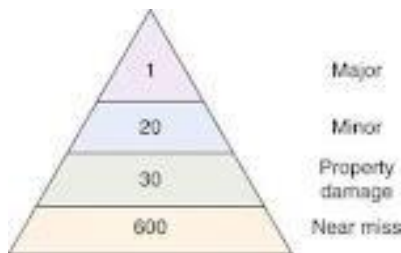


Illustration 1

The ratio is that for every 600 Near Miss events a Major injury or serious injury (e.g. broken long bone, any amputation, penetrating eye injury / loss of sight, loss of consciousness etc.) will occur.

Investigating Near Miss reports

The recipient of a NM04 report (usually a team leader, supervisor or manager) should immediately acknowledge receipt and assess if there is sufficient information in the report to understand the nature of the near miss and how likely it is for an accident to occur.

An investigation should then proceed in a prompt fashion, involving the originator of the report and any other relevant persons who have witnessed the incident, and an action plan prepared detailing 'who will do what & when'.

If further competent safety advice or guidance is required during the investigation stage, then the manager should telephone the H & S team on 01422 393067.

How to report Near Miss events

There is a Near Miss reporting form (NM04) in the document library of the Health & Safety intranet page that can be filled in electronically and sent to the H & S team via

incident.reporting@calderdale.gov.uk

Ideally paper copies of the Near Miss form should be printed off and kept in workplace areas so that all staff can readily fill out a report and hand in to their supervisor or line manager.

The NM04 form can be sent anonymously to the health & safety team at 3rd Floor in Princess Building if preferred.



‘Grasping the Nettle’

It is often the case that it will be an observer who spots a ‘Near Miss’ situation occurring that may involve other employees, including supervisors and managers. This can put the ‘observer’ in a quandary as to whether to take action or not take action.

It is important to remember that the Near Miss reporting process is all about preventing accidents and not about proportioning blame against an individual. We all have a moral duty to protect our employees and the public from harm and there is also a legal duty under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 on all of us to report any hazardous safety concern. Each time that an observer ignores or fails to report a Near Miss situation, the likelihood of a subsequent accident/ serious injury increases.

Learning outcomes and sharing knowledge

When a Near Miss report has been investigated and corrective actions identified / implemented, the manager should ensure that the learning outcomes from the investigation are circulated to all employees involved in the directorate/service/activity.

Any relevant existing risk assessment should be updated as necessary. The manager should then inform all employees identified in such risk assessments through briefings, safety meetings or via e-mail of any changes to the existing risk control measures.

Any written ‘safe systems of work’, activity or work instructions should also be reviewed and updated if they are affected by the Near Miss final conclusions.

It is also important that the originator of the Near Miss report is given feedback (a copy of the investigation if appropriate) on the final outcome.

For further guidance please contact the Health & Safety section on 01422 393067

Near Miss Examples

Appendix 1

Example	Possible accident	Remedial measures to consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person trips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ on an entrance mat in a building but does not fall ○ over a trailing electrical cable but does not fall because they were able to grab a corner of a desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall injury resulting in broken wrist(s) • Head injury • Sprains or strains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are regular checks on mat condition / levelness done? • Can cable be re-routed? If not can it be covered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person slips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ on a wet patch on a smooth floor in a kitchen or bathroom but does not fall ○ on walked in rainwater in a lobby or reception area but does not fall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall injury resulting in broken wrist(s) • Head injury • Sprains or strains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are spills being promptly dealt with as per procedure? • Are floors being left wet after cleaning contrary to procedure? • Are the door mats large enough to absorb rainwater ingress?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person nearly falls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ when standing on a chair to reach an item high above a cupboard but manages to steady themselves by grabbing the back of the chair ○ when taking a shortcut across a rain-soaked grassy bank instead of using the designated access footpath ○ from a ladder / stepladder whilst they were leaning out to reach something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall injury resulting in broken wrist(s), arms or legs • Head injury • Loss of consciousness • Sprains or strains • Fatal injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the need to store items in high places • What access equipment is available to use? • Are there sufficient barriers to prevent shortcuts? • Is ladder training or refresher training required?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person carrying a heavy object e.g. desktop computer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ drops it and the fall damages the outer casing / cover but it is still in working order ○ drops it and it narrowly misses their foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken computer / loss of data • Broken bones in foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanical carrying equipment is available to use? • Are safe manual handling procedures being followed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person has to quickly step aside to avoid a reversing commercial vehicle in the yard / car-park / driveway / site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatal impact injuries • Broken bones etc • Crush injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the arrangements for controlling reversing commercial & HGV vehicles on site?

Example	Possible accident	Remedial measures to consider
<p>Contractor issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A contractor is seen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ throwing materials from an elevated platform or scaffold into a skip ○ blocking emergency exit routes /doors without making alternative arrangements with management ○ parking vehicles that will obstruct access for Fire Service vehicles or crews in the event of a fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact injuries to anyone walking near skip • loss of life for anyone who is present in the building trapped by blocked route during a fire • delays in fighting fire leading to loss of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tell contractor to discipline his employee and confirm the action in writing • review and update the fire risk assessment for the temporary work ensuring employees and non-employees are informed of alternative routes • is contractor aware of parking arrangements?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person finds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a sharp knife in a bowl of water covered in soapsuds but does not get cut ○ a desk fan in a drawer with the cover guard missing ○ someone smoking in the premises ○ someone struggling whilst carrying a heavy object over a distance ○ someone not wearing the designated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) whilst working • someone transferring hazardous chemicals - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ in a confined space that has poor ventilation ○ into inappropriate unmarked containers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cuts to hand or fingers • stab injuries to hand • contact with blades causing injuries (if used) • risk of fire / loss of life • risk of musculoskeletal injuries / damage to object if dropped • injury to person that the PPE is designed to protect against • respiratory damage to user and others in area due to inadequate extraction • risk of inadvertent use or ingestion causing injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all staff aware of the procedures regarding knife controls? • Are arrangements in place to remove defective equipment? • Are No Smoking signs clearly displayed? Discipline? • Are there mechanical aids available? • Consider reminder, training or if a repeat offender, discipline • Stop activity and arrange appropriate ventilation or extraction; give instruction and training to person • Stop activity; give instruction and training to person