

# eplica Safety Lines

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## New Hires Need Safety Orientation

Statistics reveal that workers are the most susceptible to injuries during their first month on the job. That's why you need to provide basic safety training to new hires as soon as they come under your supervision. Before assigning tasks to your new employees, take the time to welcome them into your organization. Walk them around the facility and introduce them to their co-workers.

Encourage veteran employees to help newer workers feel at ease. Your efforts will make both new and veteran workers feel they are contributing to the success of your company.

Your new hires need to be made aware of how serious safety training is right from the start. In your first meetings with your new employees, reinforce the need for caution and appropriate protective equipment for each task. Emphasize that all unsafe conditions, accidents and "near misses" must be reported immediately. Show them what equipment they can and cannot operate without your authorization.

Make sure to cover these basics:

- ▶▶ Proper safety practices to use and hazards to be aware of within your department.
- ▶▶ What to do if there is an accident or injury.
- ▶▶ How to report emergencies.
- ▶▶ How to report accidents and near misses.
- ▶▶ How to report a workers' comp injury and file a claim.
- ▶▶ The location of material safety data sheets (MSDS)

- ▶▶ How to care for and use personal protective equipment.
- ▶▶ How to use tools, machinery or hazardous processes.
- ▶▶ What housekeeping and personal cleanup rules must be followed.
- ▶▶ The location of emergency equipment, first-aid supplies, emergency evacuation exit routes and meeting areas.

Use hands-on demonstrations to make sure that your new employees understand the correct procedures completely. Then, provide them with a written list of safety rules and policies and have them sign it.

By conducting new employee safety training, you are demonstrating to new hires how concerned you are about accident prevention. You should also encourage them to suggest ways to improve their own safety.

Schedule a follow-up meeting a few days after your initial orientation. You can judge if new workers understand and are using safe work practices. Answer any questions they may have. Use a checklist to review each of the specific safety practices covered in your meeting.

By initiating a thorough orientation and safety-training program, you are helping to keep employee morale high while minimizing accident and injury rates.

## Which types of on-the-job injuries cause employees to miss the most time from work?

These 10 categories account for 87.9% of the cost burden of disabling workplace injuries.

Here's the breakdown on the top 10:

1. Overexertion (injuries caused by excessive lifting, pushing, pulling, holding or throwing): \$12.4B, 25.7%
2. Fall on the same level (such as slips and trips): \$6.4B, 13.3%
3. Fall to lower level: \$5.3B, 10.8%
4. Bodily reaction (injuries caused from slipping or tripping without falling): \$4.8B, 10.0%
5. Struck by object (such as a tool falling on a worker from above): \$4.3B, 8.9%
6. Struck against object (such as a worker walking into a door): \$2.5B, 5.1%
7. Highway incident: \$2.4B, 4.9%
8. Caught in/compressed by: \$2.1B, 4.4%
9. Repetitive motion (injuries due to repeated stress or strain): \$2.0B, 4.0%
10. Assaults/violent acts: \$0.4B, 0.9%

Overall, the estimated direct U.S. workers' compensation costs for these top ten injuries totaled **\$48.6 billion in 2006**.



## May Safety Tip:

Carbon monoxide is produced as a result of incomplete burning of carbon-containing fuels including coal, wood, charcoal, natural gas and fuel oil. It can be emitted by combustion sources such as unvented kerosene and gas space heaters, furnaces, woodstoves, gas stoves, fireplaces and water heaters, automobile exhaust from attached garages and tobacco smoke. Problems can arise as a result of improper installation, maintenance or inadequate ventilation.

Since carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas, workers using gasoline-powered tools or generators need to know the symptoms of CO poisoning - dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting or tightness across the chest. Very high levels can cause death.

## Contact Us

Editor in Chief/Writer  
CLAUDIA C. HARO

Editorial Consultant/ Writer  
JEFF ADCOCK

Staff Writer  
APRIL FLAK

Contact us:  
[allsafety@eplicaservices.com](mailto:allsafety@eplicaservices.com)

... or visit us online.

# Reporting Incidents and Near Misses



An incident is similar to an accident except that it does not necessarily result in injury or damage. No matter how trivial they are, incidents should be reported to supervision just as accidents are. Employees should be encouraged and periodically reminded about the importance of reporting incidents, or as they are frequently called, near misses.

### Why Incidents Should Be Reported

Hazards, causes, and contributing circumstances are lost if not reported. Employees who don't take the time to report near misses they are involved in may not learn from them. The fact that many incidents come within inches of being disabling injury accidents makes failing to report them all the more serious.

When incidents are not reported, their causes usually go uncorrected. That means they may happen again, perhaps producing tomorrow's disabling injury or fatality. This can be illustrated by the case of the worker who slipped on a floor made slippery by a small leak in a hydraulic line. He did not suffer any injury. Two days later, when the line was still leaking, another employee slipped on the liquid, fell and broke her leg. At that point, the first employee told the company investigating the accident about his own previous near miss. Had he reported it promptly, chances are the defective hydraulic line would have been repaired before the accident happened.

### Why Incidents Often Are Not Reported

There are many reasons why a worker might choose not to report an incident in which he or she was involved. Some reasons are understandable,

but we should recognize that none of them are *acceptable* when we realize why the report should have been made.

What are some of the reasons workers don't report incidents? Probably the most common is failure to understand the importance of reporting and the harm that could result by not doing so.

Here are some others that we've heard about:

- Fear of the supervisor's disapproval.
- Not wanting the incident on their work records.
- Dislike for the red tape involved.
- Not wanting to lose time from the job on piecework assignments.
- Reluctance to spoil the unit's safety record.
- Not wanting to be the subject of an Incident investigation.

### What Can You Learn the Incident?

The whole purpose of reporting—and investigating—a near-miss incident is to find ways of making sure the same elements that were present on that occasion don't result in an accident at some future time.

Here are some of the questions to which answers must be sought:

- ▶▶ What were the circumstances surrounding the near miss? Was there a hazard that the employee should have been aware of?
- ▶▶ Is there a safety rule covering the situation? If so, did the almost-victim know it? If there isn't such a rule, should there be one?
- ▶▶ Were any safety devices, clothing or equipment used improperly or not used at all when they were called for?
- ▶▶ Have there been other near misses of the same type?

The answers should suggest ways to prevent a recurrence. Perhaps there needs to be new rules or procedures developed. Or, maybe more thorough training is required. In any case, the reporting of the incident is the vital first step.

## May Safety Quote

"There's no such thing as new accidents, just new victims."