Close Calls – Take a Close Look at Close Calls Fatality File



Close Calls Reflect Accident Hazards

A worker received an electric shock on a piece of equipment he was using. He was not injured, and he did not report the incident. A few days later another worker also received a shock from the same defective equipment, and again did not report the problem. Within days a third worker also received an electrical shock which killed him.

This true story illustrates what can happen when we ignore close calls in the workplace. A close call is a chance to identify a hazard and correct it before someone is seriously injured or killed.

We have all had many experiences with close calls (also known as free warnings) in our everyday lives. The best thing we can do is to pay attention to them and learn from them. For example, most of us have slipped while rushing down a stairway. We may have caught ourselves before falling, and then resolve to slow down in the future. Another example is pulling out to pass when driving and being faced with an oncoming car. We quickly pull back into our own lane, and tell ourselves next time we will make sure it is safe before we try to pass.

In both instances, there was the potential for a serious accident, but we were lucky. We have learned something from the close call, and will probably be more aware in the future.

Close calls in the workplace serve the same function. They give us an opportunity to recognize that something is wrong and to do something about it before someone gets hurt.