



Reporting

The ultimate objective of near miss identification, analysis and reporting is to identify safety threats of concern and to devise means for management to implement corrective actions. To do so requires that recommendations be generated, shared, and acted upon. It may take years for safety trends to be discerned, and so reporting must be archived and revisited for trending from time to time.

Since near miss reports should be trended with actual accident reports, there must be consistency in the identification and nomenclature of near miss and accident root causes.

Overcoming Barriers to Reporting Near Misses

Some of the chief barriers to reporting of near misses are fear of being thought blameworthy, being disciplined, embarrassed, fear of legal liability, and so on. Other factors that may be barriers to reporting are complacency on the part of those observing or identifying a near miss, disincentives to report, such as demanding that an investigation and report be performed on one's own time, or for fears of reprisal.

An effective means of addressing the bulk of these barriers is to, as part of the reporting process, "sanitize" reports so that individuals involved are protected from identification, thereby avoiding fear of retribution, disciplinary action, embarrassment, and so on. There also must be management commitment to a no-blame culture, and this must be perceived to be (and to be in reality) a sincere commitment by management.

The keys to overcoming barriers to reporting can be summarized as:

- Establishing a blame-free near miss reporting company culture
- Assuring anonymity for reporting near misses, as requested, by company policy and by "sanitizing" analyses and reports of information identifying persons associated with the near miss. Of course, there must be one individual (usually the near miss investigator) who must be identified as being the originator of a report.
- Establish and communicate management dispositions to the recommendations, if any, contained in a near miss report. This means that once recommendations are provided, their dispensation (implemented, planned to be implemented, or not to be implemented) must be communicated to the person who submitted a report and/or recommendation. Lack of feedback of this sort will curtail reporting as there will be a feeling that the effort was simply wasted time.

SUMMARY

Near miss analysis and reporting are important components of a Safety Management System intended to continuously improve, and trend, safety performance over time.

REFERENCES

American Bureau of Shipping. (2005). "ABS Guidance Notes on the Investigation of Marine Accidents." Houston: Author.

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