



MATHERS SAFETY SNAPSHOT

Each week the Mathers Safety Team meets to review on site incidents and track trends across the company in an effort to increase transparency and to develop proactive plans to mitigate reportable incidents.

NEAR MISS V.S. GOOD CATCH

A near miss is an event during which no property is damaged and no personal injury is sustained, but where – given a slight shift in time or position – damage and/or injury easily could have occurred. For example, let's say an employee grabs a 3/4-inch drill motor with a paint-mixer blade from a gang box. Previously, someone had removed and bypassed the switch. When the employee plugs it in, the drill motor starts unexpectedly, and the mixing blade causes the unattended drill motor to bounce wildly around the work-area floor.

A good catch is recognition by an employee of a condition or situation that had the potential to cause an incident but did not cause one due to corrective action and/or timely intervention by the employee. For example, a good catch occurs when an employee inspects a piece of electrical equipment prior to use and notices damage or an unusual condition, which prompts him to immediately tag the equipment out of service.

Why Do Near Misses and Good Catches Need to be Reported?

There are three primary reasons why these occurrences must be reported.

1. Near misses and good catches are warning signs that a piece of equipment, or even a policy or a procedure, is not working properly.
2. Reporting these events will enable the employer to investigate each occurrence, so everyone can learn from the events and take action to prevent them from happening again.
3. This reporting also helps management find trends and faults within the system.

Reports of near misses and good catches are not to be taken lightly; these situations need to be carefully investigated to determine the root causes, after which the appropriate controls must be implemented. In addition, near misses and good catches should be ranked by potential severity. If an incident could have resulted in an injury or death, a full investigation needs to be conducted. If the event created a condition that is less serious – such as a trip hazard due to an electrical cord – the hazard should immediately be removed and the risk should be communicated to everyone. Communication can be accomplished through a toolbox talk or, if the event is significant enough, a companywide safety stand-down.

Adapted from [OSHA Training Institute Education Center](#)