“Near Miss” Accidents

A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in a fatal injury - but had the potential to do so. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented an injury, fatality or damage; in other words, a miss that was nonetheless very near.

Could also be a “Near Hit”
Recognizing and reporting near miss incidents can make a major difference to the safety of workers within organizations. History has shown repeatedly that most loss producing events (accidents) were preceded by warnings or near accidents, sometimes also called close calls, narrow escapes or near hits.

Reporting of near misses by observers is an established error reduction technique in many industries and organizations.

Some near misses that we have been informed of are:
May 16, 2013

Iron Ore mine - The mine as constructing an interior dam on a tailings basin when a portion of the dam failed. Two trucks slide downslope, one remaining upright and the second overturning a coming to rest on the cab and bed. Neither driver was injured.
Nov. 15, 2013

Underground
Industrial Sand mine - A front end loader was mucking when a roof fall occurred, burying the loader to mid-axel height. The damage to the loader was extensive, although the operator was not hurt. These are pictures of pieces of the loader found in the area where the roof fall occurred.
March 18, 2014

Crushed Limestone mine - An over-the-road truck came in contact with an overhead powerline when it raised its bed, causing the cab and wheels to catch on fire. There were no signs warning of the presence of the overhead powerlines. The mine operator was also not giving all contract truck drivers site specific hazard awareness training.
June 8, 2014

Taconite mine - The 4160 volt starter/disconnect was not locked out when a mine electrician tried testing the circuit with a 600 volt meter. The safety device that prevents the door from being opened when the system is energized had been defeated. The electrician was burned from the arc flash that occurred when he contacted the bare metal conductors inside, and the meter “blew up” in his hands. The electrician was not wearing proper protective gear, and was hospitalized with burns to his hands and face.
June 13, 2014

Construction Sand & Gravel mine - When the miners broke for lunch at 12:00 noon, the Cat 245 excavator was left parked near the edge of the lake. When the miners returned at 1:00 p.m., they found that the bank had given away and the excavator had fallen into the lake. If accident occurred earlier, excavator operator might have drowned.
November 16, 2014

Industrial Sand mine - A miner was clearing snow off a rail switch with a leaf blower. The miner was wearing hearing protection and did not hear or see the train approach. The miner was knocked to the ground when the train struck him and a railcar ran over his arm resulting in the miner losing his arm.
August 8, 2014

Copper-Nickel mine - a contractor employee was filling the water truck using a fire hose. While the truck was filling with water, he was standing on the truck deck monitoring the tank level sight glass. When the tank reached the full mark, the bolts holding the top cover of the tank failed, and the pressure in the tank peeled back, just missing the employee.
July 10, 2014

Underground Industrial Sand mine - Mechanics at this mine were cutting a pipe on a tank at the underground washplant when they ignited the rubber lining of the tank. The miners underground evacuated safely. The fire burned for several days, causing extensive damage to the washplant and mine roof over the washplant.
August 12, 2014

Crushed & Broken Stone mine - Miner entered the impact crusher to remove a blockage. Rocks fell from the feeder above and engulfed him up to his knees. Afterward, two miners entered the crusher and freed him. He was transported by EMS to a local hospital.
August 12, 2014

Crushed & Broken Limestone underground mine - A haul truck was being loaded at an underground mine when a significant portion of the immediate roof above the truck fell covering the top of the truck and an area behind the truck. The truck driver received medical treatment.
September 5, 2014

Sand & Gravel mine - MSHA field office supervisor requested Technical Support assistance after a number of structural defects were found. On Friday 9/5 at between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., the situation worsened when a portion of the primary plant collapsed, including Material bins Nos. 6, 7, and 8. There were no injuries.
October 22, 2014

Sand & Gravel mine - The crushing superintendent was leaning across a 42-inch discharge conveyor belt attempting to remove a portion of the rubber belt skirting when the conveyor activated drawing him in. He was conveyed under the portable crusher and 18 feet up the belt toward the discharge point. He managed to grab on to the magnet frame and hold on until the conveyor was stopped.
November 10, 2014

Crushed & Broken Granite mine - The crusher operator was attempting to cut a wedged drill bit from a jaw crusher when it sprung free striking him in the chest and face. The victim was transported by helicopter to the hospital where he remains to date.
December 3, 2014

Cement Plant - During the mine's maintenance shutdown, three contract employees were working a 12-hour shift which began on Tuesday 12/2 at 7:30 p.m. The employees were using air arc cutting to remove the magnesium liner plates from the inside of a ball mill. After the shift ended on Wednesday 12/3 at 7:00 a.m., two of the employees went to the hospital and complained of exposures to carbon monoxide. When the mine operator was informed of the incident, the remaining three contract employees were sent to the hospital. All five of the employees were treated and released.
Dec. 4, 2014

Sand and Gravel mine - During an inspection of the wash plant, a damaged electrical conductor was found on a screen plant. An exposed conductor was contacting the metal work platform. Despite a warning light indicating a ground fault condition, two miners continued to operate the wash plant with the ground fault present.
With the great record shared by Mine Operators and MSHA in the North Central District, a few seconds or moments could have changed that drastically!

Thank You
Christopher A. Hensler
District Manager
North Central District