

## For Your Safety: Calling In Close Calls

Have you been walking through the yard and piece of metal goes flying right by your head? How about walking through a warehouse when a paper bale falls off a stack and almost clips your foot? If you answered yes to either, did you tell anybody about it? Often, close calls like these momentarily take our breath away, but we move on with whatever we were doing. In reality, the difference between being seriously hurt and walking away was inches. The next time it happens, you or someone else might not be so lucky. It is always important to report any close call that almost causes an accident.

Traditionally, companies have conducted Accident Investigations in the wake of workplace incidents or injuries. The purpose is not to assign blame but to determine the root cause of the accident. Once the facts are known, the process can be changed and improvements made so something similar won't happen again. This is often called "Learning from losses." As great a safety tool as is accident investigation, it has one fundamental flaw: Someone must get hurt before we find and fix the problem.

Now, let's go back to the close calls with the flying metal and falling bale. What if you told somebody what happened and, because of this, procedures were adjusted to control the stack height of bales, and blast covers are installed on the shear to prevent projectiles? We have achieved the goal of accident investigation without an injury. Close Calls are a great indicator that something needs to be changed in the operation. You can play a major role in getting the changes made by always reporting unsafe conditions and making sure to alert your manager when you have a close call.

## For Your Information: School's Out

For just about every part of the country, schools have released their students for summer vacation. This usually means that you will see an increase of children visiting scrap yards with their parents. As scrap is being unloaded and weights taken it is very easy for a child (or even an adult) to wander off if they are not being watched. You must serve as a line of defense to keep an eye out for customers (and children) to make sure they are going to the right locations to dump material. If your company has a minimum age requirement for who can come on site make sure to question the driver as to who is riding along with him. If you don't feel comfortable addressing a customer, make sure to alert your supervisor. Protecting the customer is everyone's job so make sure you do your part by keeping an eye out for who is coming in the yard this summer.

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