

Ask The Expert: Should Workers Be Disciplined for a Near Miss?



QUESTION

If a worker commits a serious safety violation and causes a near miss incident to occur, should we discipline him even though nobody actually got hurt?

ANSWER

Yes.

EXPLANATION

Workers who break safety rules and endanger their co-workers should be disciplined even if it causes only a near miss. What counts is the conduct, not the consequences. It's imperative to require your workers to do their jobs safely and hold them accountable when they don't. Otherwise, they'll keep on committing safety infractions until somebody actually does get hurt.

In addition to creating an unsafe culture, failure to enforce safety rules increases your liability risks for OHS violations. It's one of the first things OHS inspectors will

point to in fining you. And it totally undermines your chances of proving due diligence in a prosecution.