TOOLBOX TALK · HEALTH & SAFETY

Near Misses & RIDDOR: *The Warning Before the Injury*

RIDDOR 2013 and the accident book. What must be reported, by when, and why the near miss you ignore is the injury you get next month.

Last reviewed: August 2026 HSE · RIDDOR 2013 England, Scotland and Wales ukworkrights.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, similar duties come from Northern Ireland's own health and safety law. Contact HSENI (Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland), not the HSE.

THE RISK

Why near misses matter

- A near miss is an **unplanned event that could have caused injury or damage but didn't**. This time
- The same hazard that produced a near miss is **still there tomorrow**
- Near misses are **free information**: the only warning you get that costs nobody an injury
- Under-reporting is the norm: most workplaces capture a fraction of what really happens
- The most common reasons people don't report are **fear of blame, paperwork, and believing nothing will change**
- A workplace where near misses are never reported is **not a safe one. It is a blind one**

BLAME KILLS REPORTING

If reporting a near miss gets someone disciplined, reporting stops within weeks and the organisation loses its early warning system entirely. The purpose is to find the hazard, not the person.

THE LAW

What must be reported under RIDDOR

- **Deaths and specified injuries**, including fractures other than to fingers, thumbs and toes, amputations, loss of sight, crush injuries, serious burns and scalpings
- **Over-seven-day injuries**, where a worker is incapacitated for more than seven consecutive days, reported within 15 days
- **Occupational diseases**, including carpal tunnel syndrome, hand-arm vibration syndrome, occupational dermatitis, asthma and tendonitis, where diagnosed and linked to work
- **Dangerous occurrences**: specified near-miss events such as scaffold collapse, lifting equipment failure or accidental gas release
- **Gas incidents** and certain incidents involving members of the public
- Reporting is the **responsible person's duty**, usually the employer, not the injured worker
- There is also a separate duty to keep an **accident book** and record over-three-day injuries

SEVEN DAYS AND THREE DAYS ARE DIFFERENT THINGS

Over-seven-day injuries must be reported to HSE. Over-three-day injuries must be recorded but not reported. Both counts exclude the day of the accident itself.

YOUR RIGHTS

Reporting and protection

- To have your injury **recorded in the accident book**, and to record it yourself if needed
- To **report concerns without suffering detriment** (Employment Rights Act 1996 s.44)
- Protection from **dismissal for raising health and safety concerns** is a day-one right with no qualifying period, s.100
- Raising serious safety concerns may also be a **protected disclosure** under whistleblowing law
- You can **report directly to HSE** if your employer will not: 0300 003 1647 or through the HSE website
- An accident book entry can matter later for **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or a personal injury claim**

WRITE IT DOWN WHILE IT'S FRESH

Record what happened, when, who was there and what you were doing. Memory fades and staff move on. A contemporaneous note is worth far more than a recollection a year later.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Frequently asked questions

Q Do near misses have to be reported to HSE?

Most do not, but certain specified near-miss events, called dangerous occurrences, must be reported under RIDDOR. Examples include scaffold collapse, failure of lifting equipment, and accidental release of a substance that could cause injury. All near misses should still be reported internally so the hazard can be fixed.

Q What if my employer refuses to record my injury?

You are entitled to have an accident recorded. Make your own written record with the date, time, what happened and any witnesses, and keep a copy. You can report the matter to HSE on 0300 003 1647. Being treated badly for reporting an injury is unlawful detriment.

Q How long do I have to report an over-seven-day injury?

The responsible person must report it to HSE within 15 days of the accident. The seven-day count starts the day after the accident and includes days the person would not normally have worked, such as weekends.

FOR WHOEVER RUNS THIS TALK

Delivery notes & attendance record

Before you start

The barrier to near-miss reporting is almost always culture, not knowledge. If people think reporting gets someone in trouble, they stop. Say plainly that the purpose is to find the hazard, not the culprit, and mean it.

Questions to ask the team

1. What near miss have you had in the last month that you didn't report?
2. What stopped you reporting it?
3. Do you know where the accident book is and who reports under RIDDOR?
4. Has anything changed because of what we reported?

The law behind this talk

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR); Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979 (accident book); Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2

Employers must give workers comprehensible information, instruction and training on the risks they face, Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2(2)(c) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg. 10. Keep the record below as evidence that you did.

Attendance record

Topic	Near Misses & RIDDOR: The Warning Before the Injury
Date	
Site / location	
Delivered by	
Actions agreed	
Next talk due	

Attendees

Name	Signature

Use the Print handout button to print this record. General information only, not legal advice. This toolbox talk is generic material and is not a substitute for a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent person. Employers remain responsible for their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

FREE H&S GUIDES

Near Misses & RIDDOR *free guide*

Get plain-English information on your rights and your employer's legal duties.

HSE: REPORT AN ISSUE
0300 003 1647
hse.gov.uk

ACAS
0300 123 1100
acas.org.uk

CITIZENS ADVICE (ENGLAND)
0800 144 8848
citizensadvice.org.uk

CITIZENS ADVICE (WALES)
0800 702 2020
citizensadvice.org.uk

CITIZENS ADVICE SCOTLAND
0800 028 1456
cas.org.uk

UK WORK RIGHTS
Near Misses & RIDDOR
ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-nearmiss.html

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OTHER WAYS TO GET HELP

Ways to contact Acas

- Helpline: 0300 123 1100, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.
- Another language: call the helpline and ask for an interpreter. Acas says it can provide one straight away.
- Welsh: Acas can provide its services in Welsh if you ask.
- Cannot hear or speak on the phone: Relay UK, 18001 0300 123 1100, on the Relay UK app or a textphone. You type what you want to say and get text replies from the adviser.
- British Sign Language (BSL): call the helpline through the InterpretersLive! video relay service, in your browser or on the InterpretersLive! app. The interpreter calls Acas and translates between you and the adviser.
- If you cannot call the helpline (for example, you find it hard to speak on the phone, you are not in the UK, or you don't have enough phone credit), use the Acas accessibility form to ask for advice another way. Acas usually replies by email within 10 working days, by BSL or lip reading video call within 2 working days, or by phone within 5 working days. Acas reviews these requests Tuesday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
- Early conciliation: if your case is already in conciliation, contact your conciliator. Their details are in your "Introducing Your Conciliator" email.
- Training, mediation support, collective conciliation or arbitration (not advice): Acas Training and Customer Services, 0300 123 1150, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email events@acas.org.uk. Relay UK: 18001 0300 123 1150. You can ask for an interpreter or call through InterpretersLive!. To book a BSL interpreter in advance for any Acas service, email events@acas.org.uk or call 0300 123 1150.

OTHER WAYS TO GET HELP

Ways to contact Citizens Advice in England

- Adviceline: 0800 144 8848. Usually open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, not on public holidays. Free from mobiles and landlines. At busy times you might wait up to an hour. If you call from a mobile you'll be asked for your postcode.
- Cannot hear or speak on the phone: Relay UK. Dial 18001 then 0800 144 8848, using the app or a textphone. There's no extra charge.
- Money or debt: debt helpline 0800 240 4420, Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm, Saturday 9.30am to 1pm, not on public holidays. Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 240 4420.
- Online chat with an adviser: debt problems (Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm, Saturday 9.30am to 1pm); claiming Universal Credit (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm); energy bills or supply, consumer problems, or any other problem (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).
- Your local Citizens Advice: search by postcode or town on the Citizens Advice website. Most can only help if you live or work in their area.

OTHER WAYS TO GET HELP

Ways to contact Citizens Advice in Wales

- Advicelink: 0800 702 2020. Monday to Friday 8am to 7pm, Saturday 9am to 1pm, not on public holidays. Free from mobiles and landlines. At busy times you might wait up to an hour.
- Cannot hear or speak on the phone: Relay UK. Dial 18001 then 0800 702 2020, using the app or a textphone. There's no extra charge.
- Online chat with an adviser: usually Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
- Your local Citizens Advice: search by postcode or town on the Citizens Advice website.

OTHER WAYS TO GET HELP

Ways to contact Citizens Advice in Scotland

- Free phone line to your local bureau: 0800 028 1456. Say the first part of your postcode and you'll be put through.
- British Sign Language (BSL): make a free BSL call to an adviser through the Contact Scotland BSL website or app (video relay interpreting on a computer, tablet or mobile). Contact Scotland BSL is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Language or access needs: tell the bureau and they'll do their best to meet them.
- Applying for Universal Credit for the first time: Help to Claim helpline 0800 023 2581, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, or webchat on the Citizens Advice Scotland website. There's also a BSL service for Universal Credit applications.
- Defined contribution pensions (aged 50 or over): Pension Wise, 0800 138 3944, or +44 20 3733 3495 from outside the UK.
- NHS complaints in Scotland: Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS), 0800 917 2127, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
- Gambling Support Service advice line: 0800 328 1131, Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm.
- Your local bureau: find its contact details and opening times by postcode on the Citizens Advice Scotland website.
- If you cannot hear or speak on the phone, you can use Relay UK to make the call by typing. Use the free Relay UK app, or a textphone: dial 18001 first, then the number.

OTHER WAYS TO GET HELP

Ways to contact HSE

- Tell HSE about a health and safety issue: use the online form, or call 0300 003 1647 and HSE will fill it in for you. Building safety (Building Safety Regulator): 0300 790 6787.
- Ask HSE about health and safety, or reach a named person at HSE: use the online form, or call 0300 003 1747.
- Both lines: Monday and Tuesday 8.30am to 5pm, Wednesday 10am to 5pm, Thursday and Friday 8.30am to 5pm.
- Fatal and major injuries only: Incident Contact Centre, 0345 300 9923, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm. Report everything else online.
- Out of hours, only after a work-related death, a serious incident with several casualties, or one causing major disruption: duty officer, 0151 922 9235.
- Cannot hear or speak on the phone: HSE says it provides a text relay service for people who are D/deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment.
- If you cannot hear or speak on the phone, you can use Relay UK to make the call by typing. Use the free Relay UK app, or a textphone: dial 18001 first, then the number.
- Website information in another format (accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio or braille): use HSE's online contact form. HSE replies within 21 days.
- Other languages: HSE publishes translated information in many languages (hse.gov.uk/languages).

KEEP GOING

More free *toolbox talks*

TOOLBOX TALK

Risk Assessment

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-riskassessment.html

TOOLBOX TALK

First Aid at Work

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-firstaid.html

TOOLBOX TALK

Root Cause Analysis (5 Whys)

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-rootcause.html

FREE GUIDE

Health and safety at work

ukworkrights.co.uk/guide-health-safety.html