What Qualifies as a Workplace Incident? Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. **Underreporting:** Failing to report minor events or near misses can lead to bigger incidents down the line.
2. **Misclassification:** Not knowing what qualifies as an “incident” can cause confusion and delays in response.
3. **Unaddressed Hazards:** If incidents go unreported, root causes may never be corrected.
4. **Inconsistent Recordkeeping:** Vague definitions lead to unreliable incident data, affecting safety planning.
5. **Legal Consequences:** Misjudging whether something is reportable may result in fines or violations.
6. **Employee Hesitation:** Workers unsure of what to report may withhold critical safety information.

STATS

- OSHA defines a workplace incident as any unplanned event that results in or could result in injury, illness, or property damage. Employers must report fatalities within 8 hours and serious injuries within 24 hours.
- According to the National Safety Council, 72% of workplace incidents that result in injury were preceded by at least one unreported near miss.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recorded 2.8 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses in 2022, many of which originated from unreported or misclassified incidents.
- WorkSafeBC found that organizations with clear definitions of “workplace incidents” had 30% more proactive reports and 22% fewer time-loss claims.
- A NIOSH study revealed that accurate and early incident reporting contributed to a 37% reduction in serious injuries in participating workplaces.
- The Ontario Ministry of Labour reported that failure to recognize and report certain workplace incidents led to compliance violations in 18% of inspected sites.