



# Top Compliance (Pty) Ltd

## Occupational Health and Safety

*Your business' safety is our concern*

### Our Services

✓ Auditing ✓ Consulting ✓ Training ✓ Retail

Cell number: 082 442 8521

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QSE B-BBEE - Level Four

REGULATIONS  
RULES - LAW  
REQUIREMENTS  
**COMPLIANCE**  
STANDARDS  
TRANSPARENCY  
POLICIES

### February 2026 NEWSLETTER

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## Understanding near misses, incidents and accidents and why it matters

In Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), the terms *near miss*, *incident* and *accident* are often used interchangeably. The [Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993](#) (OHSA), however, places clear importance on understanding the distinction between them, as this directly affects compliance, reporting duties, corrective action and the prevention of claims, lost man-hours, injury, property damage, fatalities and potential litigation. Correct classification supports the employer's general duty of care in Section 8, which requires employers to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risk to employee health, as far as is reasonably practicable.

A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, damage or loss, but had the potential to do so. In these situations, the outcome was fortunate rather than safe. Examples include an employee slipping on a wet floor but regaining balance, or a tool falling from height and narrowly missing a colleague. Although no injury occurs, the hazard and risk were present. In terms of Section 8(2)(d), employers must identify hazards and evaluate risks associated with work activities. Near misses therefore represent critical warning signs and missed opportunities to fulfil this duty. Immediate reporting and investigation allow hazards to be eliminated or controlled before injury occurs. Even where no visible injury is apparent, [trained first aiders](#) must be available to assess employees for strains, shock or delayed symptoms, in line with [General Safety Regulation 3](#).

An incident refers to an unplanned event that results in minor injury, illness or damage, but not serious harm. Examples include small cuts requiring first aid treatment, minor burns or equipment damage without significant injury. Incidents indicate that a hazard has already caused harm and that existing controls were insufficient. In accordance with Section 8(1) and Section 8(2)(e), employers must implement and enforce safe working procedures to prevent recurrence. Incidents must be recorded and investigated to identify root causes. At this stage, trained first aiders play a critical role in providing immediate treatment and limiting complications, while [safety representatives](#) appointed under Section 17 ensure proper reporting, investigation and follow-up actions are implemented.

An accident is an unplanned event that results in serious injury, illness, fatality or significant property damage. Examples include falls from height causing fractures, exposure to hazardous substances requiring hospitalisation, or machinery-related injuries. Accidents trigger specific legal duties under Section 24 of the OHSA, requiring reporting to the Department of Employment and Labour where applicable. Employers must also investigate and keep records in terms of [General Administrative Regulation 9](#). During such events, competent [first aiders](#), [basic firefighters](#) and [trained emergency responders](#) are essential to comply with Section 8(2)(b), which requires precautionary measures and the provision of the necessary means to apply them. Effective emergency response can significantly reduce injury severity, damage and loss of life.

Near misses, incidents and accidents form part of the same risk continuum. When near misses are ignored, they often lead to incidents, and incidents can escalate into serious accidents. The OHSA therefore requires proactive risk management rather than reactive response. Effective safety management begins at the near-miss stage, where intervention is simplest and most cost-effective.

Best practice in terms of the OHSA begins with annual induction training, ensuring employees understand hazards, risks, reporting procedures and their responsibilities under Section 14, which requires employees to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others. This must be supported by ongoing training on policies, safe working procedures and emergency preparedness roles, including [first aiders](#), [basic firefighters](#) and [safety representatives](#). Employees should be encouraged to report hazards, near misses and incidents without fear of victimisation under Section 26, supported by a clear and accessible reporting system.

Regular health and safety committee meetings, established in terms of Section 19, are essential to review reported hazards, near misses, incidents and accidents. These meetings provide a structured platform to analyse trends, review risk assessments and implement corrective and preventative measures. Lessons learned must be used to update risk assessments, safe working procedures and checklists in line with Section 8(2)(d), after which affected employees must be retrained to ensure understanding and compliance.

Planned job observations and effective supervision support compliance with Section 8(2)(a,e), which requires employers to provide and maintain safe systems of work. Supervision confirms procedures are applied in practice and assists in identifying unsafe acts or conditions early. As workplaces evolve, new hazards may emerge, making continuous evaluation of risks and controls essential.

Correctly identifying and managing near misses, incidents and accidents is fundamental to effective occupational health and safety management under the South African OHS Act. By focusing on early warning signs, ensuring competent emergency response personnel, and committing to continuous training, reporting and review, organisations not only comply with legal requirements but also establish a proactive safety culture where prevention, preparedness and accountability form part of everyday operations.

*“Near misses whisper. Incidents warn. Accidents shout.”*

For more information, please contact us on [info@topcompliance.co.za](mailto:info@topcompliance.co.za)

Yours in Health and Safety

|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |                                                                                     |  |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |
| <a href="#">Occupational health and safety auditing and consulting</a>              |                                                                                     | <a href="#">Online safety shop</a>                                                   |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |
|  |  |   |  |  |
| <a href="#">Appointments, checklists and templates</a>                              | <a href="#">First aid equipment</a>                                                 | <a href="#">Signage</a>                                                              | <a href="#">Legal posters</a>                                                        | <a href="#">Safety Equipment</a>                                                      |

| ONLINE ACADEMY - <a href="https://academy.topcompliance.co.za/">https://academy.topcompliance.co.za/</a>      |          |                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Occupational Health and Safety Courses                                                                        | Online   | Onsite<br>Excluding<br>travel |
| <a href="#">Safety representative – Legal Liability</a>                                                       | R980.00  | R1300.00                      |
| <a href="#">The Occupational Health and Safety Act &amp; responsibilities of management – Legal Liability</a> | R1250.00 | R 1730.00                     |
| <a href="#">Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment</a>                                                     | R735.00  | R875.00                       |
| <a href="#">Food facility health &amp; safety course in terms of R638</a>                                     | R735.00  | R875.00                       |
| <a href="#">Basic Ladder Safety Course</a>                                                                    | R735.00  | R875.00                       |
| <b>Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses</b>                                                                   |          |                               |
| <a href="#">Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting</a>                                                             | R735.00  | R875.00                       |
| <a href="#">Fire &amp; Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning</a>             | R810.00  | R950.00                       |
| <b>First aid</b>                                                                                              |          |                               |
| <a href="#">Level 1 - US 119567 - Perform basic life support and first aid procedures – THEORY MODULE</a>     | R400.00  | -                             |

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Occupational Health and Safety Courses                                                                        |  |  |
| <a href="#">Safety representative – Legal Liability</a>                                                       |  |  |
| <a href="#">The Occupational Health and Safety Act &amp; responsibilities of management – Legal Liability</a> |  |  |
| <a href="#">Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment</a>                                                     |  |  |
| <a href="#">Food facility health &amp; safety course in terms of R638</a>                                     |  |  |
| <a href="#">Basic Ladder Safety Course</a>                                                                    |  |  |
| <b>Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses</b>                                                                   |  |  |
| <a href="#">Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting</a>                                                             |  |  |
| <a href="#">Fire &amp; Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning</a>             |  |  |

| ONSITE TRAINING                                                                                               |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| First Aid Courses:                                                                                            |         |
| <a href="#">Level 1 - US 119567 - Perform basic life support and first aid procedures</a>                     | 2 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 2 - US 120496 - Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace</a>    | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 3 - US 376480 - Provide first aid as an advanced first responder</a>                        | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 1 &amp; 2 - US 119567 &amp; 120496</a>                                                      | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 1, 2 &amp; 3 - US 119567, 120496 &amp; 376480</a>                                           | 5 days  |
| <a href="#">Level 2 &amp; 3 - US 120496 &amp; 376480</a>                                                      | 3 days  |
| <a href="#">Child and infant CPR &amp; choking</a>                                                            | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Adult CPR &amp; choking</a>                                                                       | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Adult CPR &amp; choking and AED</a>                                                               | 1 day   |
| Occupational Health and Safety Courses                                                                        |         |
| <a href="#">Safety representative – Legal Liability</a>                                                       | 1 day   |
| <a href="#">The Occupational Health and Safety Act &amp; responsibilities of management – Legal Liability</a> | 1 day   |
| <a href="#">Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment</a>                                                     | 1 day   |
| <a href="#">Food facility health &amp; safety course in terms of R638</a>                                     | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Basic Ladder Safety</a>                                                                           | 6 hours |
| Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses                                                                          |         |

|                                                                                                   |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <a href="#">Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting</a>                                                 | 6 hours |
| <a href="#">Fire &amp; Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning</a> | 1 day   |