# A screen shot of a computer Description automatically generated Awareness safety talk

Awareness is one of the most, if not the most, important aspects of accident prevention.

As defined by the National Safety Council, a “near miss/incident” is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage but had the potential to do so. An “accident” is an unexpected or unintended event that results in property damage or personal injury.

Although each of these includes terms such as unplanned or unexpected there are steps that can be taken to identify potential hazards and help us in working to avoid them. When incidents or near misses occur, the opportunity should be taken to investigate why and how they occurred and what to do to prevent the same situation from happening in the future. This in turn can prevent a near miss from turning into a future accident.

**Questions should be asked to raise your awareness level before beginning any work:**

* Do I have the right equipment/tools for the job?
* Are the tools and equipment I am using in good shape or do they need to be repaired/replaced before I begin?
* Is the work required to be done reasonable to get done safely?
* Are the chemicals/materials I am using safe? Do I need additional personal protective equipment before I begin?
* Is there a safer way to complete this task?
* If using machinery, are all guards in place and in proper working condition?
* Are there written procedures on the task I am doing and am I following those procedures?
* Am I taking a shortcut to get the job done faster and in turn compromising safety?
* Focusing specifically on the task at hand takes away many of the potential risks. Thinking one step ahead of what you are doing and anticipating any possible hazards will help to avoid unwanted outcomes. Additionally, not thinking too far ahead or letting your mind wander will help you to keep in sight any issues that have the possibility to arise.****