

To recap on definitions from earlier:

☐ **Hazard**

"Something with the potential to cause harm."

Examples of a hazard include:

- Physical (noise, vibration, electricity)
- Chemical (asbestos, toxins, carcinogens)
- Biological (hepatitis, HIV, leptospirosis)
- Psychological (stress, verbal abuse)

☐ **Accident**

"An unplanned and undesired event which results in harm to a person or damage to property."

☐ **Near Miss**

"An unplanned, undesired event, which, under slightly different circumstances, could have resulted in harm to a person or damage to property."

Physiological effects are concerned with the body and how events in the workplace affect the body and the types of harm that could result. Typical examples can range from serious damage, such as broken bones, contracting of illnesses such as cancer, down to minor knocks and cuts.

There are also psychological effects that a worker may suffer such as stress and depression. Psychological effects are concerned with how events in the workplace affect the workers' mental health and the types of harm that could result, such as loss of confidence or mental breakdowns.

It is worth noting that physiological and psychological effects are not mutually exclusive and often occur together due to the effects of an accident.

Revision Exercise

Identify which of the following descriptions are an:

- Accident
- Dangerous occurrence
- Near miss
- Work-related ill-health

1. A brick falls off a scaffold and hits Tom on the head. He is not wearing a safety helmet and as a result incurs a head injury.	Your Answer:
2. Tom is now wearing his safety helmet and as he walks past the same scaffold, a brick falls and just misses Tom. No injuries are incurred.	Your Answer:
3. Tom is mixing cement by hand and often doesn't wear gloves. As a result, he has started to develop dermatitis.	Your Answer:
4. Tom is part of a large team erecting scaffolding over 10 feet tall. As he works, part of the scaffold collapses. No one is injured.	Your Answer:

Accident Causation

The identification of causes of an accident or incident is a critical step in the investigation process. Adverse events have many causes. What may appear to be bad luck (being in the wrong place, at the wrong time) can, on analysis, be seen as part of a chain of failures and errors that led almost inevitably to the adverse event. (This is often known as the Domino effect.)

Each domino represents a failing or error, which can combine with other failings and errors to cause an adverse event.

Dealing with immediate cause (B) will only prevent this specific sequence.