

# THE ACCIDENT TRIANGLE.

Frank Bird, 1969. 1.75 million accident reports, one pattern.

BIRD'S ACCIDENT RATIO, 1969

1 : 10 : 30 : 600

Same causes, different outcomes. The base tells you about the top before it happens.



1

**WHAT THE RATIO SAYS**  
For every serious injury, Bird found about 10 minor injuries, 30 property-damage incidents and 600 incidents with no visible injury or damage.

2

**WHAT IT DOES NOT SAY**  
It is not a prediction. Six hundred near misses do not add up to one death, and fixing minor injuries alone does not prevent fatalities.

3

**WHY IT STILL MATTERS**  
The base of the triangle is the largest and cheapest source of learning. Near misses show where a control is failing before anyone is hurt.

4

**THE CATCH**  
Serious injuries often have different causes from minor ones. Give high-potential events the attention you would give an injury.

5

**WHAT TO REPORT**  
Anything unplanned that could have hurt someone or damaged something, however small it looks. Especially anything with fatal potential.

6

**WHAT WE DO WITH IT**  
Every report gets feedback. High-potential events are investigated, and the lesson goes back to the floor.

The base of the triangle is where we learn cheapest.

SEE IT

REPORT IT

LEARN FROM IT

Source: F. E. Bird Jr, 1969 analysis of 1,753,498 accident reports from 297 companies in 21 industries for the Insurance Company of North America; published in Bird and Germain, Practical Loss Control Leadership. Ratios vary by industry and site. Treat the triangle as a lesson about reporting, not a formula.

