

# TOOLBOXTALK

## GUIDELINES

### GUIDELINES TO A PRODUCTIVE TOOLBOX TALK

Communication is one of the best ways to prevent accidents. One of the best ways of communicating the importance of safety on a construction job is through toolbox talks. You don't have to be a professional speaker to give a good toolbox talk, but there are ways you can make your talks more effective. Let's take a look at them.

### PLANNING THE TOOLBOX TALK

- Know your topic and plan your agenda a few days before the meeting so you're well prepared. (Be able to present the topic without reading it and lead a discussion afterward.)
- Coordinate handout literature or other material or equipment you intend to use at the meeting.
- Limit the length of your presentation. Given your operation, you would be the best judge of how much time to set aside. Generally speaking, a half-hour is adequate. Allow for questions and answers afterwards—about 15 minutes.

### THE TOPIC

- Choose timely topics. Gear your talks to safety problems you are encountering at the moment or that you anticipate for upcoming jobs.
- Review recent injuries— What happened? Why did it happen? What should have been done?
- Review recent safety violations— What was the violation? What hazard did it create? What injury could have occurred?
- Review upcoming work schedule— What hazards are you concerned about? What safety equipment should be used? What procedures should be followed?

### THE FORMAT

- Start the meeting out on a positive note.
- After welcoming your staff, promote teamwork and how toolbox meetings provide valuable information and give everyone the opportunity to get together and exchange ideas.
- Be sure to compliment a job well done. Morale plays a bigger part than people think in affecting safety, productivity and job satisfaction.
- Do a wrap-up. Reinforce the important points brought out during the meeting. Be sure to reflect on examples of the

CORRECT products, tools, equipment and usage as the last impression.

- Thank your staff for their interest and enthusiasm.
- Ask the participants to print and sign their names on the form at the end of the toolbox talk. This will help you track who has received the training.

### HOW TO GIVE A TOOLBOX TALK

- Keep it informal.
  - Even though you may be using a written toolbox talk and other resources, use your own words in making the actual presentation.
  - For effective and rewarding results, do what's comfortable for you.
  - Use visual examples. There's something to be said for "seeing is believing."
  - Whenever possible, use actual equipment to illustrate your points.
    - If you're talking about ladders, have one handy so that you can point out such things as loose rungs or split side rails.
    - If you plan to talk about the danger of using patched up hand tools, show a few samples. Consider a chisel with a mushroomed head or a hammer with a taped handle.
  - Invite people to participate. The purpose of any toolbox talk is to get people to think about safety problems.
  - Make the talk a hands-on session. Have your people name hazards and what to do about them. Encourage them to offer suggestions to improve safety. When asking questions, use open-ended questions instead of questions that require only a yes or no answer. Listen to your employees and find out if further training is needed.
- ### THE PLACE AND TIME
- Hold the meeting in your work area first thing in the morning or immediately after lunch when the workday will least be interrupted and the work area is relatively quiet.
  - Hold a toolbox meeting once a week to reinforce your company's philosophy that job safety is important.
  - Toolbox talks will help you in the daily operations of your business. Keep them handy. Like any tool, they can't help unless you use them.