



## GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A TOOLBOX TALK

### 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 materials 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 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 team 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 comfortable and relatable. The goal is to educate people, not bore them by throwing information at them.
- Relay all of the important information in the training, but feel free to use your own words if it will help you teach.
- For effective and rewarding results, do what's comfortable for you.
- Use visual examples – possibly on your phone. 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 examples. 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. Provide positive feedback to everyone who participates.
- When the group seems unwilling to participate, offer questions that are open ended: What are some ways we could protect ourselves in this scenario? What are some ways this can lead to injury or harm?
- Hammer key points with questions that require one word answers and repeat until the entire group knows that answer.

### 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 cannot help unless they are used.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace and workers have rights. OSHA can help answer questions or concerns from employers and workers. OSHA's On-site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses, with priority given to high-hazard worksites. For more information, contact your regional or area OSHA office, call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), or visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

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