

Toolbox talks/meetings

A Toolbox Talk is an informal group discussion that focuses on a particular safety issue. Toolbox talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions on the job site. Toolbox Talks are a way to ensure all workers are participating in safety activities, and have an opportunity to discuss hazards/controls, incidents and accidents.

Toolbox Talks, sometimes called Toolbox Meetings, are an opportunity for management to communicate to employees how they can do their jobs safer and better as well as provide an opportunity for workers to raise WHS issues directly to the management representatives. Topics discussed in these meetings may be topics that you are familiar with, or topics that you have limited knowledge about.

If the topic is something that you are familiar with, it may be easy to tune-out and not listen to the safety information presented. Always listen to the discussions as if you have never heard about the topics before. You may just learn something new, about the newest protective equipment, or a smarter way to do your job. Information passed on in a safety meeting has a purpose - to stop you or your co-worker from being injured. Safety meetings also allow employees an opportunity to relay safety concerns or improvement ideas to their supervisors.

Accidents result from unsafe acts or unsafe conditions. According to some experts, for a variety of reasons, unsafe acts typically account for 90% of all accidents. Safety meetings serve as a preventative measure against unsafe acts by educating employees on how they can do their job safely.

If you're still not sold, let's look at the potential cost of accidents. More specifically, how can accidents directly affect you?

- **Death** - The ultimate unwanted result. Where does this leave your loved ones?
- **Financial Cost** - Lost pay or reduction in pay. Who pays the bills? Are you the sole income producer in your household?
- **Pain and Suffering** - An obvious detriment that no one desires.
- **Disability** - A life changing experience. Now you're not able to do what you use to do. Maybe now you can't cast that fishing rod? Ride that bike, hug your girlfriend, lift your child, or simply see? Or perhaps you're confined to a wheelchair. Good bye career.
- **Competitiveness On Bidding Jobs** - Other than payroll and benefits, worker' compensation insurance and accident costs may represent the bulk of a company's operating expense. When a company's operating expense increases, they are then less competitive to bid jobs. If your company is not awarded jobs, where does that leave you?
- **Your Co-Workers' Safety** - Perhaps you and your co-worker have been working together for a period of time. Chances are you may spend as much time with your co-workers as you do your own family. Thus, you obviously do not want something bad to happen to them. Watch out for their safety too.

Safety meetings are a perfect opportunity for you to communicate any safety ideas or concerns that you may have. Participate in your safety meetings. If you don't participate, then your ideas will not be heard. Who knows...the idea that you have may very well save your co-worker's life or even your own.