



OPERATION FRESH START SAFETY TOOLBOX: TOPICS FOR DAILY SAFETY MEETINGS

What is a toolbox talk?

It is an informal meeting among a group of employees where the discussion focuses on safety.

Who can give them?

Anyone can conduct the discussion. It is best if led by a person with experience in the topic.

How often should they be done?

OFS supports the idea of a 5 minute safety talk each day before work begins.

Why do them?

In addition to reminding workers of work safety, they reinforce the idea that all are responsible for the whole crew.



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CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)

- CO is a colorless, odorless and toxic gas
- CO is produced by incomplete burning of fuels in vehicles, generators, furnaces, charcoal grills, heaters, and other construction equipment
- CO impedes the ability of blood to carry oxygen
- CO can rapidly accumulate in areas that are well ventilated
- Use of gasoline powered tools indoors can be fatal
- The symptoms of CO overexposure are: headache, nausea, weakness, dizziness, visual disturbance, changes in personality and loss of consciousness
- If symptoms occur, immediately turn off equipment and go outdoors
- Watch co-workers for the signs of CO poisoning

CONFINED SPACES

- A confined space has limited means for entry/exit and can include a space that has an open top
- The atmosphere inside a confined space can be very different from the outside atmosphere
- Deadly gases may be trapped inside the space
- The space may lack enough oxygen to support life
- The space may trap excess oxygen to promote an explosion if an ignition source is introduced
- Never trust your senses to determine if a space is safe
- Always check with your supervisor before entering any space
- Never enter a confined space to help a downed worker

TRENCHES

- Supervisors must inspect an excavation site, adjacent areas and protective systems every day
- Notify sub-contractors and visitors of the trench location
- Ensure all vehicles are kept a safe distance
- Reposition ladders frequently to keep them 25 feet away from workers in the trench
- Supervisors must remove workers from the excavation when water accumulates in the trench or there is evidence of other protective system problems
- Review and keep apprised of other hazards such as falls or accumulation of gases
- Do not enter an unprotected trench
- Inspect a protected trench before entering
- Immediately exit and report any problems
- Do not assume a warning sign before a cave-in

LADDERS

- When transporting a ladder, keep the front-end elevated
- Side rails of a portable ladder should extend at least 3 feet above an upper landing
- Non-self-supporting ladders should be placed at a 4:1 ratio
- Make sure ladders are free from oil, mud, grease and other hazards that can cause a slip
- Ladders should not be loaded beyond the manufacturer's duty rating
- Only use ladders for the purpose they were intended
- Place ladders on stable, level surfaces
- Protect ladders that are near passageways or driveways so that vehicles or pedestrians do not hit them
- A worker should always face the ladder while climbing or descending
- Always use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing or descending
- Do not carry objects or loads that could cause you to lose balance

ELECTRICITY

- “Low voltage” does not imply safety
- Wet conditions can intensify electric current
- Make sure work-boots are non-conductive
- Watch for overhead power lines – handle metal studs in a safe manner
- If a fluorescent light fixture is falling don’t try to catch it
- Occasionally check power cords and other electrical equipment for wear
- Only use equipment approved by Underwriters Laboratory or other accrediting agency
- Wear protective gear
- Don’t overload circuits

LIFTING

- STOP and THINK before picking anything up – assess the object and its weight
- Use proper form when lifting and carrying – wide stance, bend at knees, tighten abs, head high, chin in
- Lift your load using a solid two-handed grip
- Make sure your path is clear before you proceed
- Lift with your legs not your back
- Keep weight close to your body
- Pivot with your feet, don’t twist your body
- Do not reach more than 10 inches from your body to lift or place an object
- If you can, push or pull instead of lifting
- Use your shoulder to support objects when carrying them long distances
- Use teamwork when the load is too heavy

REPETTIVE MOTION AND OTHER BODY PART INJURIES

- Pay attention to pain in hands, wrists or other body parts
- Use the right tool for the task to avoid unnecessary stress on body parts
- Never use your hand to hammer or pound things into place
- Take frequent breaks to stretch fatigued muscles
- Change hand and body positions often, especially if your body is in an awkward position
- Maintain a healthy body
- Use good posture and correct technique
- If available, use the correct size tool for your body
- Seek medical help if you experience numbness or tingling of a body part

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

- Maintain a safe environment with good housekeeping
- Don't leave trip hazards in the work area
- Keep containers on the job for studs and nuts
- Constantly remove rubbish, scrap, and surplus materials
- Be on the lookout for foreign substances on the floors
- Cover or guard floor holes as soon as they are created
- Floor hole covers should support two times the weight of employees or equipment
- Survey the site before starting the day and continually audit the work space as work continues
- An unprotected edge 6 feet or more above a lower level should be protected by a guardrail system, safety net system or personal fall arrest system
- Keep lanyards as short as possible – try to reduce an arrest situation free fall to no more than 4 feet

NOISE

- Repeated exposure to loud noise can cause tinnitus and/or hearing loss
- Damage caused by loud noise is irreversible and permanent
- Excessive vibration causes damage to inner ear hair cells so they can't carry a signal to the brain
- Too much noise can make you feel tired, nervous and/or raise your blood pressure
- If you have to raise your voice to be heard the site may be too noisy and hearing protection is needed
- Consider the all the noise around you and exposure to others when deciding to wear hearing protection
- Banded earplugs or earmuffs are an easy solution to intermittent noise exposure
- Keep your hearing protection with you so you can have them when you need them
- The louder the noise or the longer you are exposed, the greater your risk for permanent hearing damage
- Noise induced hearing loss is 100% preventable

EYE INJURIES

- Personal protective eyewear can prevent 100% of eye injuries
- Choose protective eyewear that includes side protection
- Particles of metal, wood, dust, cement and drywall ejected by tools, wind or falls are the most common source of eye injuries
- Brush, shake or vacuum dust and debris from hardhats, hair, forehead or the top of eye protection before removing
- Do not rub eyes with dirty hands or clothing
- Remind each other every time you see someone not wearing safety glasses
- Look around and check for eye hazards before taking off your safety glasses

POISONOUS PLANTS

Blue-Green Algae (appearance of blue-green paint or scum on surface of water):

- Wear boots and gloves when working in marine environments
- Rinse exposed skin with clean, clear water
- Minimize agitation of water that can cause aerosols – inhalation is a hazard
- Minimize time spent in affected area - conduct prep work outside of the area
- “When in doubt, stay out”

Poison Ivy (vines or low shrubs, leaves are divided into 3 almond shaped leaflets, alternatively arranged):

- Learn to recognize native poisonous plants
- Wash clothing and tools exposed to the plant since allergens can remain active for years and can be transported to other places or objects
- Wear protective clothing on areas that might be exposed to poison ivy or other poisonous plants
- “Leaves of three, let them be”

INSECTS

- Use repellents containing 20% to 30% DEET
- Put repellent on your skin AND clothing
- Re-apply repellents often
- Wear light colored long sleeved shirts, long pants tucked into boots, socks and a hat
- Check hair, clothes and skin every day for ticks
- Remove ticks with a fine-tipped tweezers
- Wash infected area with soap and water
- Wash and dry work clothes on the ‘hot’ setting to kill any insects present

HEAT STRESS

- Everyone is at risk
- Drink plenty of water
- Take frequent breaks in a cool, shaded area
- Schedule strenuous tasks for earlier in the day
- Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine
- Know the signs and symptoms of heat stress, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash
- Report those exhibiting signs of heat stress immediately to a supervisor
- Some medical conditions and medications can increase the risk of heat stress

COLD STRESS

- As wind speed increases, heat can leave your body more rapidly
- Keep an eye on co-workers for signs of cold stress - hypothermia affects the brain making workers unable to think clearly for themselves.
- Wear several layers of clothing to provide better insulation
- Keep layers loose so that blood can circulate to the extremities
- Always wear a hat or cover your head to reduce the amount of body heat that escapes
- Move to a warm location during breaks
- Avoid touching cold metal surfaces with bare skin

REFERENCES

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3. OSHA eTools & Electronic Products for Compliance
<http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/oshasoft/index.html>