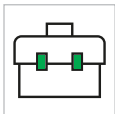


How to Deliver Toolbox Talks That Can Improve On-the-Job Safety in the Construction Industry



Introduction



Of all the tools you supply your construction workers with to ensure safe completion of their projects, one tool that you might have overlooked can have the largest impact on on-the-job safety. This indispensable safety strategy is known as a toolbox talk, an informal meeting forepersons and supervisors can deliver at the start of the workday that focuses on a single safety-related issue with the goal of making jobsite safety the top priority.

Toolbox talks do not replace formal training, but along with your Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other safety programs, they put a daily emphasis on safety to promote a culture of compliance.¹⁻³

This white paper will help you learn why toolbox talks are important, what they should discuss, and best practices for developing and delivering them.

Importance of Toolbox Talks in Construction







With its higher likelihood of injury or death compared with other industries, construction is an area in which toolbox talks can make a major impact. The most common types of fatalities and other risks associated with a construction jobsite are good topics for toolbox talks and serve as a reminder to focus on safety before construction workers start the job. When workers begin their day thinking about the risks that most commonly affect them, they may be less likely to get hurt or die and to share safety concerns with their superiors.⁴

Did You Know?

In 2018, approximately one in five—or just over 20% of—deaths among private industry workers took place in construction.³

More than half—nearly 60%—of the deaths that occurred in the construction industry were the result of these top four causes:

-  **Falling**
-  **Being struck by an object**
-  **Being electrocuted**
-  **Being caught in or between**

If these top four fatality types were eliminated, 591 lives could be saved.³

Even the most seasoned, skilled construction workers need a forum to discuss the issues they face along with regular safety reminders, especially because of the frequent changes that occur in construction work from day to day.⁴

Putting Together a Toolbox Talk



Toolbox talks can be about anything that affects your workers. Appropriate topics might include hazards specific to your worksite, construction trends, and standards updates and reminders. These talks are also a good time for equipment inspection. You can develop your own toolbox talks or look for existing ones that meet your needs.

Toolbox talks are available for purchase and for free online, but not all sources are relevant and reliable. Before purchasing or using a toolbox talk, check that the provider is reputable, the content is accurate and relevant, and the presentation is both the appropriate length and level of engagement for your audience.⁵

One provider you can trust for complimentary quality content is OSHA, which offers toolbox talks about hazards, protective gear, standards, and more.¹ Keep in mind, though, that while ensuring your workers are informed about standards is important, you might need to dig a little deeper to find out why they might find compliance difficult. Discuss the issues that impact workers' on-the-job compliance such as human factors, organizational culture, or unrealistic rules. Honest discussion can help build a culture of compliance once you help address the concerns your workers face.⁵

Likewise, if you find a trusted source for toolbox talk content that you can purchase, be sure the program fits your workers' needs and unique challenges. Your best option for purchasing toolbox talks is through a trusted safety training provider with whom you already work. Such a partner can seamlessly blend the toolbox talks into your current safety training program and ensure their relevance to your business.⁵

Toolbox Talk Checklists



Use these checklists to help you develop, deliver, and evaluate your toolbox talks:

Content Checklist ⁵	Presentation Checklist ^{1,5}
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pick a topic that affects your current worksite (and stick to this one subject). <input type="checkbox"/> Tell stories and use examples from the job you are currently on or from a recent project. <input type="checkbox"/> Inspire your staff to think about their mental state and its relation to safety. <input type="checkbox"/> Explain best practices and any relevant safety standards (be sure to discuss factors that your workers say make following these practices and standards difficult to apply on the job). <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the talk is SMART, or "Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rehearse to become familiar with both the content and mode of delivery. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a quiet area with no distractions to deliver the toolbox talk. <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver the talk live and informally. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure your audience can hear and understand you. <input type="checkbox"/> Give an animated presentation using props if possible to engage your audience. <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome questions on the topic and comments on how to improve future talks. <input type="checkbox"/> Record names of attendees. <input type="checkbox"/> Change things up by choosing different topics and delivering them in different ways. <input type="checkbox"/> Set a good example by following all safety protocols while you work.



Need help spotting jobsite hazards that make perfect toolbox talk topics? Visit <http://us.msasafety.com/safetyevaluation> for an MSA safety evaluation.

References

1. <http://www.oshatraining.com/Toolbox-Talks.php>
2. <https://www.ehs.harvard.edu/programs/toolbox-talks>
3. <https://www.osha.gov/data/commonstats>
4. <http://www.tradesource.com/2017/04/25/the-importance-of-construction-toolbox-talks/>
5. <http://www.coatingspromag.com/articles/safety/2017/11/improving-your-toolbox-talks-5-tips>

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