



Tailgate/Toolbox Safety Meetings

HS04-003B (06-05)

A 5-Minute Safety Training Aid

“Tailgate” or “Toolbox” safety meetings are 10-15 minute on-the-job meetings held by supervisors to discuss safety and work-related accidents and illnesses with employees.

Tailgate/toolbox safety meetings have proven their worth by alerting employees to workplace hazards, and by preventing accidents, illnesses and on-the-job injuries.

Why Have Them?

Tailgate/toolbox safety meetings can be used to address actual problems on the job or in the shop. The supervisor leading the meeting can draw on the experience of workers and use that experience to remind all employees – especially newer ones – of the dangers of working with particular kinds of machinery, tools, equipment, and materials.

What to Talk About

Talk about work practices, machinery, tools, equipment, materials, attitudes, and anything else that may cause or contribute to a work-related accidents or illnesses. Keep the topic relevant. If you have punch presses, talk about punch press guarding. If you are building an apartment house, talk about lifelines and safety belts. Choose a topic you think needs safety review. If you notice that spills aren't being cleaned up promptly, discuss it. If there has been an accident or a near-accident on the job, talk about it.

What happened? Where did it happen? How can it be prevented from happening again?

Encourage employees to suggest topics. They often know best what and where the dangers are.

How to Run a Good Meeting

1. Hold the meeting on the worksite, preferably in a location where everyone can sit and relax.
2. Conduct the meeting at the beginning of the shift, right after lunch, or after a break.
3. Choose the topics carefully. Topics should be about health and safety problems that really exist on the job. Research the problem before the meeting. There is plenty of easy-to read material around on almost every industrial hazard. For machinery, consult the manufacturer's operations manual. For handling toxic substances, get a copy of the material safety data sheet. Your company's insurance carrier is another good source of information. The Texas Workers' Compensation Commission supplies a wide range of online printed material on worksite safety and health at www.twcc.state.tx.us.
4. Don't choose too broad a topic. You can't cover “Hand Tool Safety” in a 15-minute meeting. Instead, try a topic like “Defective Hand Tools.”

5. Encourage as much employee participation as possible, yet keep your meeting short.

Sample Topics For Tailgate/Toolbox Meetings

1. Why are guards left off of machines?

Guards are placed on machines to prevent workers from contacting moving parts. Many workers are killed or injured every year because guards are removed and not replaced.

Why are guards left off? Ask the group to give reasons. Some common responses may be:

- a. I didn't have time to replace the guard.
- b. I wanted to make sure the machine was working okay. I just never got around to replacing the guard.
- c. I put on a new drive and the old guard didn't fit.
- d. I had to remove the guard to adjust the machine.
- e. I couldn't work with the guard on. It slowed me down too much.
- f. Listen, I've run these machines for years without guards and I've never been hurt.



These excuses have been given countless times. After the accident has happened and someone has been killed or injured, the guard is replaced and strict rules are enforced to make sure the machine is never operated again without the guard. Of course, it's too late for the victim. The purpose of meeting on this topic is to make sure rules are enforced before an accident can happen.

2. Defective Hand Tools

- a. Give examples of defective hand tools found on the job such as mushroomed heads, split handles, loose handles, dull or broken teeth, and spread wrenches. Point out the defects.
- b. Ask how many employees in the meeting have had an accident or know of an accident caused by defective tools?
- c. With employee input, set up a program for reporting, removing from use, repairing or replacing defective hand tools at your operation.

Remember to practice safety. Don't learn it by accident.

The Texas Department of Insurance,
Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI/DWC)
E-mail resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us
or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

Safety Violations Hotline
1-800-452-9595
safetyhotline@tdi.state.tx.us