



SAFETY TALKS:

Tips For Providing Safety Talks to Your Employees

As a supervisor or manager, providing your employees with frequent, site-specific training is an important part of your job. Safety training offers the opportunity to make a great impact on morale and productivity, as well as helping your company provide a safe and healthful work environment.

Set A Good Example - If you don't work safely and if you take short cuts, anything you say about safety won't be followed. Your actions communicate more clearly your true attitude towards safety than anything you say. You must be the example your employees look to when they think about safety on the job.

"People Don't Care What You Know, Till They Know That You Care." - Remember you don't have to be a professional speaker. You do need to be sincerely interested in the well-being of your team. Even better, if you have a passion for the topic you are addressing, your enthusiasm and sincerity will clearly communicate the importance of the subject. Make sure your audience can see you and speak loudly enough to be heard by everyone. If you are nervous when you're talking to your employees, that means you're making it all about you. You have information they need, focus on them.

Plan Ahead - Whether you speak for five minutes or five hours, you need to plan how to deliver the topic. Know the key points and repeat them. Practice in front of the mirror. Breathe deeply because that will relax you, keep you calm, and make your voice carry. Do your homework ahead of time. Anticipate the questions your employees are likely to have so you can be ready with answers. If they surprise you, don't pretend you know. Say 'that's a great question. I'm not sure I know the answer, but I will find out.' Be sure to follow up with answers.

Keep it Simple - If you take five minutes to talk about safety, make sure you only talk about two or three key points and repeat them several times. You can use one of OSC's 5 Minute Safety Talk Sheets, or an OSHA Fact Sheet or other similar document to stay on track. Your listeners can only absorb a limited amount of information, so small amounts of information are best, and repetition helps to reinforce the message. Ask questions at the end to determine if you've been understood.

Use Personal Experiences or Other Good Examples - Headlines from newspapers or magazines can emphasize your safety points, or use a personal experience to underline the importance of safety. Take the opportunity to remind your coworkers to practice safety at home as well as on the job.

Praise good habits - It's easy to find fault and to point out when a job is being performed incorrectly. Your coworkers will respond more positively if you take a positive approach and give them recognition for a job well done. Describe the positive performance or how a group solved a problem in a safe way. Look for the positive and use your "good-seeing" eyes on the job. Encourage employees to report good safety habits and recognize their fellow workers.