Attitude and Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

DEFINITION: WORKPLACE SAFETY ATTITUDE

Workplace safety attitudes refers to our tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a safety goal, idea, plan, procedure, prevention or situation. Safety attitudes influence our choice of actions and response to challenges, incentives and rewards in the workplace. Positive workplace safety attitudes are essential for an accident free work environment that ensures higher efficiency, best quality, saves budget on cost of accident, raises morale, business profit and goodwill.

WHAT’ S THE DANGER

NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

People with negative attitudes complain about everything, including having to practice safety. They are less likely to care about the desired quality of the job to be done or how they will do it. A negative work attitude can lead to unsafe work habits and accidents. It becomes all too easy to ignore the safety precautions that keep workers safe, thereby putting them at risk.

MISTAKES

Carelessness is the biggest cause of accidents. Mishaps happen when workers have negative attitudes like these:

- Emotional acts or feelings which distract.
- Tiredness, slowing physical and mental reactions.
- Risk-taking, cutting corners or ignoring safety procedures.
- Recklessness with decisions, tools, machinery, chemicals, or work procedures.
- Selfishness, not thinking how one’s actions may affect others.

- Complacency, especially if the task is habitual and workers are under pressure
- Being afraid to ask questions because training and work procedures have covered a lot of ground- sometimes too much to remember.
- Bullying by superiors, causing employees to work in an unsafe manner.

NEW/ YOUNG/ INEXPERIENCED

Work safe organizations report that new inexperienced workers are often seen to be particularly vulnerable due to:

- Not understanding the risks or consequences of the risks, or being overconfident.
- Not having the foundation skills required such as dexterity, intuitive understanding, love of tools, or problem-solving.
- Not having learnt the regulations or struggling to make sense of the regulations.
- Having a lack of real commitment to learning good practice.
- Being afraid to speak out for fear of being stigmatized, or losing their job.
- No-one on a site taking on the responsibility of role modelling good behaviours.
- Susceptibility to negative peer influence, e.g. learning to see near misses as a ‘laugh’.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

POSITIVE ATTITUDES

Positive people seldom give up. They usually perform well in the workplace because they are motivated to maintain an open mind, are receptive to new ideas, pay attention to details and consider the possible outcomes of the ways in which they act. They develop safe work habits because, among other things, they are always looking for ways to improve.

INDIVIDUAL STEPS TO IMPROVE SAFETY ATTITUDES

Positive workplace safety attitudes are essential for an accident free work environment.

Everyone can take positive steps to improve safety attitudes by:

- Taking personal responsibility for their own safety and that of their co-workers.
- Paying attention to training.
- Following every step in every job every time.
- Knowing and following safety rules.
- Using required personal protective equipment.
- Keeping an eye out for hazards and always asking, “What could go wrong here?”
- Putting personal feelings and problems aside while working.
- Urging their co-workers to follow safety procedures.
- Knowing what to do in an emergency.
- Asking questions about any procedure or precaution that’s not clear.
- Reporting any safety hazards they can’t fix.

FINAL WORD

Once started, motivation to improve one’s attitude to safety will increase. There’s a reason – a million reasons – why it’s said that success breeds success. Progress might not be immediately evident, but over time the motivated worker will see how far they have come, and how their behaviours are being adopted by others.