How to Use Tailgate Talks Meeting Kit

Tailgate Talks (Sometimes referred to as Safety Talks or Toolbox Talks) are tools used to deliver short 10 – 15-minute hands-on awareness sessions to support your workplace training programs. They address specific hazards and are focused in nature. The intent of these tools is to provide workers with information on the hazards in their job and ways for them to be safe. They do not replace any component of the employer's health and safety training program.

WHY DO WE HAVE SAFETY MEETINGS?

Safety meetings are an opportunity for management and your safety department to communicate to employees how they can do their jobs safer and better. Topics discussed in safety meetings may be topics that you are familiar with or topics that you have limited knowledge about. If the topic is something that you're familiar with, it may be easy to tune out and not listen to the safety information presented.

HOW TO USE TAILGATE TALKS

When delivering your Tailgate Talk, consider the following:

1. Identify the priority topics for your worksite from the list of topics.
2. Plan your weekly or daily safety tailgate talk sessions. Choose topics that are relevant to the work being done.
3. Read the information sheet before you deliver the talk, so you are acquainted and comfortable with the material. Determine if any equipment is needed. Make sure you are familiar with any company rules related to the topic.
4. Deliver the talk where it is most appropriate. It may be on the worksite, or near the tools and equipment you are talking about.

5. When possible, use real tools, equipment, material or locations to demonstrate your points.
6. Allow time at the end the talk for questions and suggestions. Use the “Notes” section on each tailgate talk to record any questions or suggestions that you may wish to incorporate into future sessions.
7. For future reference, keep records of the meeting, who attended, and the topic delivered.

SELECTING TOPICS

Use common sense in selecting a topic. You wouldn’t want to present “Dressing for Winter Work” at the start of summer. “Heat Exhaustion/Sunstroke” is more appropriate to the season. Failure on your part to select an appropriate topic to present will result in uninterested workers, a waste of everyone’s time and a loss of creditability on the part of company management.

Observe job-safety techniques. Focus on what is important (and mandatory). Listen to and follow up on company Safety Committee and employee recommendations. Identify what poor work practices are causing injuries or accidents on the job.

TOP REASONS TO HAVE SAFETY TAILGATE TALKS WITH YOUR TEAM

These talks serve a multitude of purposes, including:

- Prevent workers from becoming complacent and taking safety for granted.
- Refresh workers knowledge on safe work practices and procedures.
- Remind workers of particular jobsite risks and hazards.
- Make known recent changes to the jobsite and working conditions.
- Provide training on new safety rules and regulations.
- Discuss any recent injuries and/or accidents and how they could have been prevented.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TAILGATE TALKS

To make any difference in promoting a company’s safety culture, safety tailgate talks must be effective. Often, Tailgate talks are canned and not relevant, or they are given perfunctorily, with little thought to the subject matter being presented or how the information is being delivered. Such tailgate talks have little, if any, impact.

Tailgate talks are most effective when they are interactive and collaborative rather than when a supervisor takes a lecture approach or talks about a topic that doesn’t relate. Engage participants. Get them involved. Ask them questions. Have them ask questions. Have them tell related personal experiences.

People learn best when they have the opportunity to share their experiences and bring their on-the-job knowledge to training, she says. Learning research has discovered that adults benefit most from learning experiences that are problem based and two-way.

FINAL WORD

Safety toolbox talks work best when they are brief and occur regularly. Talks at the beginning of shifts ensure that safety is put in front of mind and employees are more alert to possible hazards. Safety toolbox talks that engage and are easily consumed work best.