Make Safety Personal Meeting Kit

WHAT IS MAKING SAFETY PERSONAL?

It means that each of us is accountable for promoting a safe and healthy workplace for ourselves. It also means that the leadership team must minimize risks and ensure that their business and people comply with health and safety requirements.

The bottom line with employees is that when employees are more involved and when they observe that their immediate supervisors are engaged, they more likely will have positive perceptions about their company's safety culture and are more likely to work safely.

EMPLOYEES CAN APPLY SAFETY IN THEIR LIVES

- **Use Personal Illustrations**

One of the most obvious ways to do this is to simply talk about your own safety experiences. There's something about hearing someone share a recent personal experience, observation or incident that makes us listen more closely. When we hear a safety moment from someone and we know it's meaningful and relevant to him or her, it's easier to make a personal connection. Easy to do!

It is not unusual and instructive to relate personal safety stories about you, family members, or friends! Stories add a nice personal touch when they are relevant to a current situation. Share them so all can learn from them.

- **Personal Safety Behavior is Linked to Day-to-Day Exposure**

Research shows that people differ in terms of individual traits, values, and abilities that impact safety behavior. Talk about those – starting with yours.

Example:

If you know you have a high-risk tolerance, and you're going to be working at heights all day, you may have to fight the urge to use the wrong type of ladder or not tie off properly in certain situations because it will take more time to do so. But, for someone else on the team, his/her blind spot might be getting distracted, or not being aware of his/her immediate surroundings. So he/she also might be at risk when working at heights, but for different reasons (e.g., forgetting to tie off their safety harness due to distraction or dropping a tool, which then causes a "line-of-fire" hazard below:

- **Sharing Successes and Failures**
    - When we get personal in our safety moments, whether they are good or bad it tends to focus on someone being injured or a near miss when someone was almost injured or killed.
    - Talk about all the times we did the job safely and made the right decisions in order to put safety first. Talking about the things that have worked or not, and the potential harm prevented proactively. It encourages other team members to think about what they can do to prevent injuries, and that anyone can make a difference, no matter who they are.
    - Identify some things that you have done to reduce risks.
    - Point out the successes of someone else on your team and what he or she has done to promote safety in a similar situation. This can be applied to the work being done today and can encourage your team while giving them specific takeaways and tips they can apply in their own day-to-day work experiences.
- **Personal Safety in Workplace**

Safety outside of the workplace can have a great personal impact on the workers and it is a great way to truly engage them. Making safety personal can take a number of forms, from talking about

common sources of injury at home to providing resources for workers to keep their families safe.

- **Make Home Safety Practices Relevant to Personal Safety at Work**

Very rarely do people take their work home with them, but when someone is hurt at home they often take their injury to work with them. Make safety personal will get them thinking about risk 24/7, cut down on injuries at home and reduce employee absenteeism as a result.

If employees learn to use personal awareness safety concepts to address human error and make these concepts part of their daily routine, not only will the company notice injury reductions but there will be a tremendous decline in other numbers as well, from customer complaints to equipment damage. This also provides additional value for the worker because reducing errors not only lowers the risk of injury but it also decreases the amount of time and money they waste due to mistakes, from DIY projects at home to misplacing their keys.

TIPS TO MAKE SAFETY PERSONAL

“Failure to fully think the task through” has been referred to as the hidden safety hazard or unsafe act that contributes to workplace accidents.

Why workers do not “think”:

- **Anger:** If you feel yourself getting angry – stop and think about the situation, before you act or respond in anger. Count to 10 or take a deep breath before you do anything else.
- **Confusion:** If you don’t understand the instructions, you have been given – ask. It’s not wrong to ask questions, but it could be a hazard if you don’t – if it exposes you or others to danger.
- **Daydreaming:** Daydreaming or inattention on the job is dangerous and it could kill you. If this is happening to

you, force yourself to focus and concentrate on the task at hand.

- **Fatigue:** If you are tired, it’s often hard to think things out clearly. You can avoid this problem by getting enough sleep, eating properly, and keeping yourself fit.
- **Indifference:** Don’t let yourself get in a rut. If you feel your job is becoming routine –think about ways to improve things.
- **Worry:** Worry can be very distracting unless you learn to control it. There is no magic formula for controlling worry, but if you have a serious problem that you are preoccupied with – talk to your supervisor about it.

FINAL WORD

Creating a legitimate safety culture takes more than policies and procedures; it also requires personnel to truly buy in to safety. One of the best ways to do that is to constantly remind them of what’s at stake for them personally–their own health and their role in the well-being of the people they work with.