Tips For Presenting Safety Talks!

The Safety Talks! in this series are written to provide an easy-to-understand overview of safety basics. You will conduct an effective, weekly safety meeting by following our preparation guidelines. Then read the talk aloud – the participants can read along on their own copy of the handouts.

Ideally, you should use our Safety Talks! as the basis of a meeting in which you contribute your own actual experience and knowledge. Your Supervisor's Copy is designed to help you prepare for the meeting. It also has an agenda to keep the meeting on track and to remind you of key points for discussion.

Here are some ideas for adding your own material to your safety meetings:

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

You can keep up-to-date on safety issues by continuing to read safety publications and talking to safety experts.

Visual aids including videotapes can greatly enhance a talk. Make sure you preview any videotape or slides which you intend to use, and check to see if the videotape player or projector is working. Gather up other items for demonstrations such as related equipment, tools or hazardous materials labels, etc.

You should also get other people involved by asking them to speak or lead a meeting once in awhile. You could also invite a professional or an experienced worker from outside of your group to talk.

Arrange for workers to demonstrate safe work techniques and the use of equipment being discussed. Ask ahead of time if you may call on certain workers to tell about related safety incidents. (Be careful not to point the finger or embarrass somebody who might have been involved.)

Be sure everyone knows about the meeting in advance and what the topic of discussion will be. This gives them a chance to think of concerns and comments regarding the issues that will be discussed.

Make notes on your Supervisor's Copy. List any props you intend to use, anyone you plan to call on to speak, and any incidents you would like to relate.

Keep a record of the people who have attended the Safety Talks! sessions by having them sign your Supervisor's Copy. Keep these forms on file for future reference.

Are you worried about pre-talk jitters? Perhaps the idea of speaking in front of your fellow workers puts your stomach in a knot. You aren't alone if you feel this way. Many famous speakers and performers confess to stage fright. The trick is to make this stress work FOR you. It can give you that little edge of excitement that results in an enthusiastic, interesting talk. So take a deep breath and start your meeting!

CONDUCTING THE MEETING

Start and end the meeting on time.
If you promise to keep it brief – do so.

Observe the KISS rule. Keep it straight-forward and simple. Zero in on just a few key points – don't bore your participants by reviewing the whole safety manual in one session. In this case, less is actually more!

Stick to your agenda. Be flexible enough to respond to concerns, but keep to the topic. Control the meeting – don't let it turn into a social hour or a beef session.

Encourage questions. Remind the participants that there is no such thing as a dumb question. Everyone learns when one person asks a question. These questions will also give you a clue to whether or not you have put your point across to the audience.

You don't have to have all the answers. If you don't know, maybe you can refer the question to another experienced worker in the

group. Or promise to look into the matter and report back at the next safety talk.

Find ways to involve members of the group. It will keep their interest, and it will help them to remember what you have been discussing. Ask them for examples of hazards and safeguards related to the topic. Ask everyone to pick a partner, and have them take turns practising the safety technique under discussion.

Use Humor. It will keep the attention of your listeners, and they will be more likely to remember what has been discussed.

Be interested in your topic and the audience. Welcome comments and questions. If you are enthusiastic, your listeners will be too. Repeat their comments in your own words to make sure you understood.

LISTEN to what the participants say to you. Remember that holding”Weekly Safety Talks!” is an excellent way to keep in touch with current safety concerns. They are also an excellent way of emphasizing any safety accomplishments that have been gained by the group. If you promise to follow up on a safety concern for (or before) an upcoming meeting – it is extremely important that you do so! There is no better way of losing both credibility and respect if you don’t.

Treat your listeners with respect. Keep in mind that many may have years of experience on the job and some may have actually helped develop some of the safety procedures being discussed. When you are talking about a safety topic which is familiar to them, treat it as a review. Remind them that experienced workers can occasionally drift into unsafe habits over a period of time – even if they do know better. Invite experienced workers to comment on issues or demonstrate techniques for the group – this will keep them involved.

End your meeting on a positive note by summing up the key points that are outlined on your copy of the talk along with any further action that will be taken as a result of the safety meeting. Remember to thank the participants for their involvement.