Workplace Inspections Meeting Kit

Workplace Inspections Safety Talk

Workplace inspections are a basic necessity of any safety program. These inspections should be done prior to the start of work as well as periodically throughout the shift and at the end of the work task. Workplace inspections serve the purpose of identifying any hazards in a work area.

PURPOSE OF INSPECTIONS

- listen to the concerns of workers and supervisors
- gain further understanding of jobs and tasks
- identify existing and potential hazards
- determine underlying causes of hazards
- recommend corrective action
- monitor steps taken to eliminate hazards or control the risk

THREE TYPES OF INSPECTION REPORTS

Ongoing: Supervisors and Workers continually conduct ongoing inspections as part of their job responsibilities. Such inspections identify hazardous conditions and either correct them immediately or report them for corrective action. The frequency of these inspections varies with the amount and conditions of equipment use. Daily checks by users assure that the equipment meets minimum acceptable safety requirements.

Pre-Operation: Pre-operation checks involve inspections of new or modified equipment or processes.

Periodic: Periodic inspections are regular, planned inspections of the critical components of equipment or systems that have a high potential for causing serious injury or illness. The inspections are often part of preventive maintenance procedures or hazard control programs. Laws and regulations may specify that qualified or competent persons must inspect certain types of equipment, such

as elevators, boilers, pressure vessels, scaffolding, and fire extinguishers at determined points in the work process and at regular intervals.

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTIONS

The purpose is to keep the workplace free of hazards. The schedule should state:

- when to inspect each area or item within the workplace.
- who carries out the inspection.
- what degree of detail to inspect each area or item.

HOW OFTEN INSPECTIONS ARE PERFORMED WILL DEPEND ON SEVERAL FACTORS:

- the frequency of planned formal inspections may be set in your legislation.
- past incident records.
- number and size of different work operations.
- type of equipment and work processes – those that are hazardous or potentially.
- number of shifts – the activity of every shift may vary.

INSPECTION PRINCIPLES

1. Draw attention to the presence of any immediate danger – other items can await the final report.
2. Shut down and “lock out” any hazardous items that cannot be brought to a safe operating standard until repaired.
3. Do not operate equipment. Ask the operator for a demonstration. If the operator of any piece of equipment does not know what dangers may be present, this is cause for concern.
4. Look up, down, around and inside. Be methodical and thorough.
5. Describe each hazard and its location in your notes. Allow “on-the-spot” recording of all findings before they are forgotten. Record what you have or have not examined in case the inspection is interrupted.
6. Ask questions, but do not unnecessarily disrupt work

activities.

7. Consider the static (stop position) and dynamic (in motion) conditions of the item you are inspecting.
8. Consider factors such as how the work is organized or the pace of work and how these factors impact safety.
9. Discuss as a group, “Can any problem, hazard or accident generate from this situation when looking at the equipment, the process or the environment?” Determine what corrections or controls are appropriate.
10. Do not try to detect all hazards simply by relying on your senses or by looking at them during the inspection.
11. Take a photograph if you are unable to clearly describe or sketch a particular situation.

FINAL WORD

There can be a variety of issues in any single work area. It is important to take the time to thoroughly check your work area for hazards and take the steps to mitigate them. Eliminate as many hazards as you can before relying on a less efficient control to protect yourself such as PPE.