

JSA Organizational Transition Safety Focus - First Week

How to Hold an Effective Toolbox Safety Meeting

What are they?

Toolbox safety meetings are short safety meetings covering a specific safety topic or type of hazard. They have been used in industry for many years. Common topics for these meetings include one or more of the following:

- 1. Hazards of a job that is about to be started.**
- 2. Causes and corrective action for a recent accident or “near miss.”**
- 3. Job hazards that should be emphasized along with safety controls that will prevent accidents.**
- 4. General problems concerned with both on-job and off-job safety.**
- 5. Seasonal safety information**

How large should a Toolbox Safety Meeting be?

The ideal size for a toolbox safety meeting is 6 to 10 workers. Larger groups can be used, however, the workers will be less likely to enter into any discussions.

How long should they last?

A toolbox safety meeting normally lasts approximately 10 minutes *if* workers are not seated, *if* the topic is well chosen, and *if* the discussion does not get off on a tangent. In preparing for a meeting, and it appears that the interest will last more than 10 minutes, consider a series of 3 or 4 meetings or hold the meeting in a room where the workers can sit comfortable and where noise and other distractions are absent.

Who should lead the Toolbox Safety Meeting?

Normally a supervisor leads the meeting, simply because it's his or her responsibility to know the employees, the nature of the job to be undertaken and its associated hazards. There is no reason that a worker cannot conduct the meeting *provided* he or she (1) takes the assignment seriously, (2) is given sufficient time to prepare, (3) is not too nervous about the idea, and (4) is given encouragement and help, if it is needed. A small meeting is generally better for a person who is not used to speaking to a group.

How should a Toolbox Safety Meeting be conducted?

There is no one best way. However, the following suggestions should give a good chance of success.

No. 1 – Make a clear announcement of the time, place and reason for the meeting. **Start on time.**

No. 2 – Explain why the meeting is being held. ***ES&H will provide one-page briefing sheets that have daily toolbox safety meetings topics for each workweek of the transition.***

No. 3 – Keep the meeting from going off on a tangent. If a worker hits on a thought that has merit, promise to have a huddle on that topic at a later date. **Keep the promise!**

No. 4 – Ask questions about the topic to generate discussion. Allow time for discussion and questions. If you don't know the correct answer, don't guess at it. Call your Safety Representative who probably has the answer.

No. 5 – Point out things that are being done right as well as problem areas.

No. 6 – Use a real accident case to emphasize a point. The more recent and the more close (geographically) to your location, the more effective the example will be. Personal experiences are usually the best example.