



Safety Brief Series

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How to Conduct a Tailgate Talk

Use T2 Tailgate Talks as guides to help you conduct 10-15 minute tailgate training sessions for your crew.

The Concept

A tailgate talk is a short informational meeting held with employees to discuss a worksite related safety topic. The term *tailgate meeting* comes from the practice of meeting around the tailgate of a pickup truck on site. The goal of the tailgate talk is to inform employees of specific hazards associated with a task and the safe way to do a job. Tailgate talks also serve as reminders to employees of what they already know while establishing the supervisor's credibility and conscientiousness about his/her responsibilities for safety.

Tips for Running Successful Tailgate Talks

- Keep them brief. Ten to 15 minutes is an ideal amount of time for a tailgate talk.
- Keep them specific. Tailgate meetings must address specific hazards or safe workplace practices that relate to the job and/or work the employees are actually performing.
- Keep them relevant. Meetings should draw on the experience of employees and utilize that experience to remind them of the dangers of particular construction processes, tools, equipment and materials.
- Limit sessions to a small number of workers. Six to ten is a good number.
- Always give workers an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the tailgate talk. Don't make snide remarks to employees who do ask questions, as this will discourage others from asking questions later.
- Conduct tailgate talk training sessions an average of once a week. Dedicate a specific time for the training. Hold sessions early in the week, but not on Monday mornings. Choose a quiet spot that is comfortable for your workers.
- Keep a short record of what topic was discussed, when, and which employees were present so you can avoid repetition and maximize the impact of the talks.
- Practice what you preach. Nothing makes a trainer lose credibility faster than to have a worker see him/her doing something that violates the safety procedures that were covered in a previous tailgate talk. Always set a good example.
- Remember to always just KISS (Keep it Simple for Safety).

Prepare Your Presentation

- Present one topic per session. It is easier for most workers to digest one topic at a time.
- Use topic-related fact sheets like the Tailgate Talks provided by the T2 Center (found at: www.t2center.uconn.edu).
- Look for visual aids (examples: warning signs, a flipchart, an illustration on poster board).
- Photocopy handouts ahead of time.
- Read through the materials the night before.

Conduct the Session

- Keep your presentation informal. Hold sessions on employees' turf.
- Limit sessions to no more than 15 minutes to avoid losing employees' attention. Employees are more likely to look forward to shorter sessions.
- Conduct sessions regularly. Consistently held sessions reinforce the importance of safety. Employees are more likely to put concepts into action and constant reinforcement keeps ideas fresh.
- Do not "lecture."
- Do not use words your employees won't understand.
- Use visual aids.
- Involve the workers in discussion of the topic.
- Allow time for questions at the end.
- Have workers sign a sheet showing they were trained and keep it on file.



Basic Training Tips:

- Be enthusiastic about the topic.
- Don't speak in a monotone voice.
- Don't "spoon-feed" information to trainees. Get them involved.
- Choose topics employees can relate to.
- Set a good example.
- Reward good ideas and safe practices.
- Show you really care.



For more Tailgate Talks, Safety Briefs or more information about the Connecticut Technology Transfer Center, visit us at: www.T2center.uconn.edu

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