

Safety 101

Toolbox Talk Guidelines

A **Toolbox Talk** is a casual workplace safety talk that focuses on a specific topic. A supervisor leads the talk, focusing on that day's work, such as a new or uncommon task, workplace hazards, and/or safe work practices. It's important to demonstrate to workers that safety is a priority in your business by taking the lead and showing them that safety is not only one person's job; it's a company commitment. They help combat complacency by keeping health and safety top of mind.

TOOLBOX TALKS ARE:

- short (less than 15 minutes);
- organized to typically happen at the start of the shift, before work starts or when tasks significantly change;
- a way to refresh information for the workers;
- led by management (not the in-house safety professional);
- documented;
- an opportunity to discuss last-minute safety checks; and
- a chance for more experienced workers to share information with their team.

TOOLBOX TALK TIPS

1. **Know your audience:** Keep the topic relevant and specific to your work. It is harder to keep your audience's attention if they can't relate to the topic. Personal activities can also be a focus, including travelling for a kid's sport team, renovation projects, or snow removal, etc.
2. **Keep it short and undistracted:** Make only the necessary points. If you have more information, break the topic down into separate talks or create a handout for workers to take with them. Avoid holding them where there are distractions that take

away from the message (running vehicles, noisy areas, etc.).

3. **Tell a story:** While numbers are important, people remember stories and not statistics. Storytelling is a powerful way to help workers identify with the message you are delivering to them.
4. **Be interactive:** Make sure you engage with the audience. By using discussions, hands-on examples, or demonstrations, workers are more involved and participate in the talk instead of feeling like they are enduring a lecture. Making the talk multi-dimensional also helps workers retain the information.
5. **Keep the positivity:** While previous incidents within the company are a tempting topic, focus on being proactive instead of reactive. Use the Toolbox Talk as an opportunity to encourage positive behaviour and improve workplace safety, avoid using it as a platform to analyze a negative situation or incident.
6. **Keep a record:** Include date and time, the topic, who presented, and who was in attendance. Record if there are any concerns from the workers. This demonstrates worker participation and provides you with a record of what topics have been discussed already.