

Qualities of an Effective Safety Meeting

Frequent safety meetings are important to the success of your safety program. Shift level safety meetings are an important part of any safety awareness program.

Every safety meeting must contain three elements to be effective:

- 1 – Communicate that employee safety is a high priority with the company.
This can never be over communicated when it is true.
- 2 – Concise and focused on a specific topic without rambling stories and content.
- 3 – Encourage employee participation and feedback.

The safety meeting leader does not need to be a highly trained or a polished presenter, but does need to be able to communicate with employees, answer questions, or at least be able to get answers to questions, and be capable of reinforcing the company's commitment to employee safety and safety procedures.

The best time to hold a safety meeting is at the beginning of the shift. Be absolutely sure to start the meeting on time, having the participants sign in quickly before the meeting starts. Start by thanking the participants for their attendance and attention, stating the primary meeting topic or purpose, and handing out any meeting materials. Unless the setting is a formal classroom with formal trainers, the shift level safety meeting should be short, no longer than 15 minutes. Any longer and employee's minds will wander as they begin thinking about their work day rather than concentrating on the meeting and safety.

Regularly scheduled safety meetings will help your employees understand that safety is an important issue at your company and they will help carry the company safety message throughout your facility keeping the awareness of safety issues at the forefront.

Safety meetings are also one of the best methods to inform workers and motivate them to get safety out of the "classroom" and into the actual work environment. Safety meetings can be formal or informal but should always be focused, concise and interesting.

The basic elements of a safety meeting include, planning, preparation, supervision, and documentation. Selecting a topic for a safety meeting is not always easy, but well worth the time spent in determining what topics are important to your company.

- Safety meetings encourage safety awareness. Other means of getting the safety message across are often too easily ignored. But, when a group of workers get together to discuss the hazards they have encountered and the steps they can take to eliminate them, it increases each worker's safety consciousness.

- Safety meetings get employees actively involved. Safety meetings get employees thinking about safety and encourage them to come up with ideas and suggestions for preventing accidents and minimizing the hazards with which they are most familiar.
- Safety meetings motivate employees to follow proper safety practices. Small group meetings are the best place to demonstrate the uses of protective equipment, proper lifting techniques and other safety procedures.
- Safety meetings can help to nip safety hazards in the bud. A safety meeting is the time to pinpoint minor hazards and concerns before they result in real problems. It also presents a good opportunity to discuss hazards that are inherent in the workplace and that experienced employees are likely to take for granted.
- Safety meetings introduce workers to new safety rules, equipment and preventive practices. In addition to introducing new things, a safety meeting is a good time to reinforce the importance of long-standing safety procedures and to remind employees of the reasons behind them.
- Safety meetings provide vital information on accident causes and types. Regular meetings are the best way of keeping employees up-to-date on the hazards in their environment and what can be done about them. They also make it easier for the company to maintain accurate accident statistics, an important tool in tracing the progress of prevention efforts.

A quality, highly visible safety program pays big dividends in non-safety areas such as improved morale, higher productivity, more time on the job, lower costs and a generally happier and healthier work force. Employees care about the company because the company cares about them.

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