

SAFETY MEETINGS – THE BASICS ON HOW TO HAVE A GREAT MEETING

Safety meetings provide an ideal opportunity to promote workplace safety; talk about specific safety problems affecting your workers; and are a good forum for workers to get together and talk about work and how things are going. Safety meetings also assist the company in meeting regulatory requirements and ensuring the company is doing its due diligence in safety, resource and financial management. Regular Safety meetings are a requirement of the WorkSafeBC regulations 2.3 for small employers.

Scheduling Safety Meetings

Schedule safety meetings should be scheduled early in a shift when your employees are more alert and less likely to be in the middle of a crucial task. Inform everybody who needs to know and send out reminders the day before, and confirm verbally with all employees you have contact during the previous days.

Extra safety meetings can be scheduled or called for special circumstances such as:

- To communicate and discuss an incident or close call
- To communicate and discuss hazards or hazard alerts including fire danger rating, danger trees, weather and terrain.
- Changes in the work plan or operations (e.g. moving to a new worksite)
- New workers being added to the crew.
- New equipment, equipment damage or repairs to equipment needed.
- Other company's operations or another company being brought onto the work site.

The Purpose of Safety Meetings

The purpose of these meetings is to:

- Increase safety awareness in the workplace and provide a positive work environment
- Review any accidents with employees and discuss their future prevention.
- Give all employees a regular opportunity to voice concerns over hazards.
- Affirm the company's commitment to safety.

Meeting topics and procedures will vary between low-risk (e.g. office staff) and high-risk employees (e.g. field or forestry workers).

Types of Safety Meetings

- Safety meetings come in many forms including:
- Regular safety meetings usually occur once a month or more frequently (e.g. weekly) with the whole crew.
- Tailgate meetings – Held on site prior to commencing work and during a project with the workers on site.
- Pre-work meetings – A meeting held before commencing work on a new work site (e.g. cut block, road, cutting permit, etc.)

Persons Responsible for Safety Meetings and Documentation

The company management will decide who is responsible for scheduling, leading and documenting the safety meetings. Safety meetings are usually led and coordinated by the owner, manager, supervisor, Safety rep, foreman or safety coordinator. The person leading the safety meetings should ensure that they are documented and those that attend are listed on the safety meeting minutes.

Steps in Preparing for a Meeting

- 1) Choose timely and pertinent content. What you talk about at each meeting depends on the current safety issues and challenges facing your company. Maybe there was an accident or near miss. In that case, focus your meeting on the cause of the incident and the necessary corrective measures. Maybe you've noticed that some employees aren't wearing required personal protective equipment (PPE). Recent changes in regulations or your employer's safety policies and procedures are also good topics for a meeting. Any of these situations could form the basis for a timely and effective safety meeting.
- 2) Inspect the worksite for hazards related to your topic
- 3) Develop the agenda; and read over the material you plan to cover. At this point, the agenda could be sent out (e.g. posted or emailed) to employees to review before the meeting, depending on the type of meeting and size of company.
- 4) Make sure you are familiar with any regulations, procedures, guidelines and company policies related to the day's topic.
- 5) Review reports of recent incidents; near misses, hazard alerts or changes in operations.
- 6) Prepare any handouts needed (e.g. Agenda, ERPs, Safe Work Procedures, workplans and maps) and print a sufficient amount for the crew.

Conducting the Meeting

- 1) On the scheduled time and place, bring the workers together for the meeting at a safe location that everyone has access to and at a time that doesn't interfere with current operations.
- 2) Using the appropriate form with agenda to guide the meeting a typical meeting could include:
 - a. Taking attendance.
 - b. Review and discuss old business and new business
 - c. Ask the crew if there are any other topics that should be added to the agenda
 - d. Review Incidents, close calls and hazards
 - e. Review Safe Work Procedures if necessary (e.g. new or revised procedures)
 - f. Review hazards identified and corrective actions

The meeting agenda and topics will vary depending on the type of safety meeting. A pre-work or tailgate meeting will focus mainly on new or current workplans and operations.

- 3) Invite the crew to ask questions and make suggestions related to the topic
- 4) Respond to questions that can be answered and offer to find out more if they cannot be answered
- 5) Allow time at the end of the meeting for questions and suggestions

- 6) Ask the crew for feedback about the meeting
- 7) Involve the crew in preparing for and/or leading future safety meetings.

Follow Up

After the safety meeting is completed, review the minutes:

- Look into complaints, concerns and suggestions the crew brought up.
- Report back to the crew to let them know what will be done.
- Complete the meeting documentation and file in an appropriate location

Provisions for Workers that cannot attend the meetings

For many operations, there are workers due to their work duties (e.g. log truck drivers, and equipment operators) and location cannot attend regular meetings. The options for including these isolated workers in safety meetings could include:

- Sending emails to workers with a copy of the safety meeting documentation and the worker confirming that they have read them.
- Phoning the worker at an appropriate time to discuss the safety meeting minutes.
- The supervisor or meeting organizer could visit workers with a printed copy of the safety meeting documentation and discussing the content with the worker
- Schedule another meeting for isolated workers at another time and location.