

# Health and Safety Programs

## Safety Talks - How to

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## What are safety talks?

Safety talks, also known as toolbox talks, safety briefings, and tailgate meetings, are short, informative, and focused meetings that discuss a certain health and safety topic. Managers, supervisors, team leads, and other individuals with health and safety responsibilities can use safety talks to provide tips and reminders to workers. These safety talks are informal discussions or meetings and do not replace formal education and training requirements.

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## Why are safety talks important?

Safety talks help raise awareness of workplace-specific hazards and provide reminders on proper procedures and measures to be taken to prevent incidents, injuries and illnesses. When used regularly, they help reinforce health and safety as the top priority, promoting a culture that is dedicated to protecting and improving worker health and safety. They also provide opportunities for workers to ask questions and report concerns, which allows for appropriate measures to be put in place before an incident or injury occurs.

Although safety talks are typically delivered informally, employers and supervisors should still keep records of safety talks, which can help demonstrate [due diligence](#) when they occur regularly. Good record-keeping will help demonstrate that appropriate topics, measures, and reminders on working safely are covered. Details of the safety talk, including the topic and contents presented, worker feedback, and attendance should be recorded. If new concerns and hazards are brought forward by workers during a safety talk, appropriate action needs to be taken to protect workers and comply with health and safety laws.

Safety talks are a valuable tool that can complement formal training when incorporated into a comprehensive [health and safety program](#).

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## When should safety talks happen?

Safety talks usually occur at the beginning of a shift or before a task to inform workers of specific hazards, safe work procedures, and other control measures to help workers perform their jobs safely. They also encourage open communication and remind workers of organizational health and safety policies and expectations. Safety talks are usually about 5 minutes long but may take longer depending on the topic and feedback from workers. Safety talks should occur regularly, such as daily or weekly, or at another frequency that meets the needs of the workplace.

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## What topics should be covered in a safety talk?

A safety talk can address any health and safety topic, hazard, or concern that applies to a workplace. Topics should be determined based on [identified hazards](#), an [assessment of risk](#), and the [control measures](#) in place. Information to consider when selecting topics includes inspection reports, risk assessments, incident and injury reports, worker feedback, and other information including observations from supervisors. Topics should also be selected based on the tasks and conditions associated with the specific work that is currently being done.

One option is to prioritize topics related to hazards that are considered higher risk. In other words, hazards that are the most likely to cause harm, or have the potential to cause severe harm, should be selected as the first topics to cover.

Workplaces may also decide to develop a schedule of topics that will be covered each day, week, or month for a specified period of time (e.g., over a year). In this case, the topics are chosen in advance, and may or may not be presented in order of risk. However, topics should still be relevant to the work that is being performed. For example, a construction company would not want to do a safety talk on the hazards related to working in winter conditions during the summer.

Examples of common safety talk topics include:

- [Confined space entry](#)
- Working in [hot](#) or [cold](#) conditions
- [Working at heights and fall protection](#)
- [Ladder safety](#)
- [Electrical safety](#)
- [Welding safety](#)

- [Safe use of hand tools](#) and [powered hand tools](#)
- [Hazardous energy control](#), including [lockout tagout](#)
- Operating powered mobile equipment, including [forklifts](#) and [elevating platforms](#)
- [Tractor safety](#)
- [Landscaping safety](#)
- [Safe use of woodworking machines](#)
- [Material handling and crane safety](#)
- [Safe driving](#)
- [Road work and traffic control](#)
- [How to identify hazards](#)
- [Preventing slips, trips and falls](#)
- [Working with chemicals](#) and [WHMIS](#)
- [Indoor air quality](#)
- [Machine safeguarding](#)
- Use of [personal protective equipment](#), including [respirators](#), [hearing protection](#), [eye and face protection](#), [head protection](#), [protective footwear](#), and [high-visibility vests](#)
- [Harassment and violence](#)
- [Fatigue](#) and [stress](#)
- [Health and wellness, and psychological health](#)
- [First aid procedures](#)
- [Emergency response plans](#)
- [Emergency eye wash stations and showers](#)
- [Fire safety](#), including the use of [fire extinguishers](#)
- [Workplace inspections](#)
- [Hazard](#), incident, and [injury](#) reporting
- Safe work procedures for a specific task
- [Preventing the spread of infectious diseases](#)
- [Ergonomics](#) and [musculoskeletal disorders](#)

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## What are some tips for preparing for a safety talk?

After the topic has been selected, prepare a brief 1-2 page document with key messages you want to convey to workers to help guide the safety talk. Include an additional page to take notes and record attendance. If the topic is longer, organize the content into appropriate sections. The following items should be considered when preparing a safety talk:

- Provide an overview of the topic, describing what it is, how it applies to your workplace, and how it could lead to injuries, illnesses or incidents.
- Discuss specific hazards and risks associated with the tasks performed by workers. Review previous incidents, near misses, and other issues if appropriate.
- Review control measures that are in place to keep workers safe, including policies and procedures that need to be followed, and required personal protective equipment.
- Develop discussion questions to prompt workers to provide feedback, including experiences, recommendations, or concerns. Be prepared to record this feedback and to address any items requiring immediate attention right away. After the meeting, use this feedback to further improve control measures. Involve and update workers on any changes or additional measures taken.
- Select an appropriate location for the safety talk, which may be in the office, near the equipment or machinery you are discussing, on a shop floor, or outside on a job site.

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## What resources could be used to prepare for a safety talk?

You can refer to your organization's health and safety policies and programs, including safe work procedures, [job safety analysis](#) (if available), and other internal documents relevant to the topic.

You can also look at resources developed by reputable sources, including [health and safety regulators](#), health and safety associations, and CCOHS (e.g., [fact sheets](#), [posters](#), [publications](#), [podcasts](#)).

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## What are some tips while presenting a safety talk?

Consider the following tips while delivering a safety talk to make it more effective and engaging:

- Keep the talks short and focused (such as discussing 3-point contact rather than everything there is to know about ladders)
- Make eye contact with workers and use effective body language
- Be enthusiastic and sincere about the topic

- Ask workers for feedback and to share relevant experiences (make notes and address items as needed)
  - Use actual equipment, tools, etc. to demonstrate tips and procedures
  - Use the prepared safety talk document to guide the meeting and use your own words and experiences as much as you can
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Fact sheet first published: 2025-05-22

Fact sheet last revised: 2025-05-22

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