

Toolbox Talks 2

001: Five Top Dangers

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Obtain a Digital Multimeter (DMM). Obtain something for a crew member to “test” with the DMM. The idea is to demonstrate verification after lockout/tagout. The item to test can be something physical, such as a dummied-up breaker panel. Or, it can be something representative, such as a drawing of an MCC panel.

What this Safety Talk covers:

Five of the top dangers and how to prevent them from causing injury. The focus is on the employee’s approach to work rather than specific use of equipment.

Discussion notes:

Introduction

OSHA accumulates statistics and releases a report each year. This report shows accidents and injuries ranked by type and ranked by cause. So you may have heard a safety talk based on that report.

This safety talk isn’t about specific kinds of accidents or injuries. Instead, it’s about five dangers that lead to those kinds of accidents. You’ll notice the items being discussed address your general approach to work, not specifically how you use a ladder or when to test a GFCI.

Many people think that addressing physical hazards on the site should be the goal of a good safety program. But most injuries occur as a result of unsafe acts, and those acts occur as a result of dangerous attitudes and practices.

Five dangers people don’t think about

1. Failing to verify. Following lockout/tagout procedures does not automatically ensure a circuit is de-energized. Always verify with a meter.
2. Lack of alertness. It takes only a second of inattention to result in disaster.
3. Rushing. When you get in a hurry, you make mistakes. These can include anything from not properly securing a ladder to using a tool in a dangerous way.
4. Failing to communicate. Communication is a two-way street. You need to listen carefully to your foreman when he or she is going over the job and the safety requirements. Your foreman also needs to listen to you. Ask questions and get answers. Do not guess.
5. Failing to follow safety instructions. Product labels, MSDS, posted signs, checklists, and work procedures all contain safety instructions. Many reported injuries would not have happened if people had read, understood, and followed the instructions in these sources of information.

Demonstration

Arguably the most preventable OSHA event is shock on a circuit that is assumed to be de-energized. Using your props, have at least one crew member demonstrate verifying the circuit is de-energized. Discuss with the crew what to check and why. Also briefly discuss using the correct test equipment and PPE for the voltage of that equipment.

Review and discussion

1. What are some dangers to look out for in your general approach to work?
2. Construction work tends to start early. In their rush to get to work, some people skip breakfast. But this practice leads to attention gaps and low energy because the brain doesn’t have the fuel it needs. What are

some things you can do to avoid such a situation? How can you prevent being pressed for time in the morning? [Note to Presenter: If you think of getting to work on time as a construction job that needs to be planned, you can avoid those shortcuts that start the day off wrong. What are the steps involved, and how can you make the job go better, so you arrive at work relaxed and ready to go?]

3. What are some other factors that affect your alertness? What about things off the job as well as on?

4. Suppose you are running behind schedule. You start to think that if you push harder, you can probably make it. There's absolutely nothing wrong with working hard. In fact, the company encourages hard work. What is the difference between working hard and working fast? *[Note to Presenter. "Working hard" is basically sticking to the job rather than goofing off. "Working fast" means "stepping on the gas" and doing things in a rush. This second approach increases the risk of errors that delay project completion, so it may actually slow you down. And it increases the risk of injury. It's better to work methodically and follow procedures. Do the job correctly so it doesn't have to be done over and so you don't get hurt.]*

5. Suppose your foreman gives you job instructions that are different from the way you just did a similar job. But also, the PPE requirements are different. How should you respond to your foreman?

6. If you bring up a safety concern to your foreman and aren't satisfied with the answer, what should you do?
[Note to Presenter: The goal is to keep the problem from being either ignored or escalated. The employee should bring the problem to the foreman's attention again. Explain the company policy on this issue.]

7. What are some communication frustrations you have on this job?

8. You've been given a solvent you have never seen before. What should you do? *[Note to Presenter: For any chemicals, read the label and the MSDS so you know what safety procedures apply.]*

9. What are some sources of safety information on this job?

10. If a work procedure is wrong or can be improved on, what should you do?

Participant's Signature and Date

[illegible]