

Toolbox Talks 2

002: Six Steps to Safety

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Review the company policies in regard to relations with other trades, in preparation for the final discussion question. Review the six steps below and try to identify a specific example of each one on your job site.

What this Safety Talk covers:

Six steps an individual can take to improve his or her personal safety.

Discussion notes:

Six steps

1. Ask, “What are the dangers?” This is the first question of safety.
2. Ask, “What can I do to protect myself?” This is the second question of safety.
3. Look. When you enter an area, look around. Look for what is out of place—this is what police, firefighters, SWAT teams, and soldiers are trained to do. Something that is out of place is probably dangerous.
4. Listen. Many dangers announce themselves. As you enter an area, don’t talk—listen for humming or other unusual sounds. Pay attention when background noise changes. Protecting your hearing with the proper PPE is an important part of maintaining the ability to use this safety technique.
5. Observe. Be aware of your surroundings. Sights, sounds, smells, and the activities of others can alert you to changing circumstances and new dangers. Look for others working in your area before you start an activity that might be dangerous to them.
6. Act. Knowing is good, but *doing* makes you safe. To be safe, know what to do and make sure you do it.

Discussing some myths about safety.

- “It’s the foreman’s job to identify the dangers.” Whose job is this, really?
[Note to Presenter: It’s a team effort.]
- “If there’s no sign requiring a particular PPE and it’s not mentioned in the procedure, you don’t need it.” What is wrong with this line of thinking?
- “It’s the company’s fault if a danger is present.” Does blame protect you? Why does “whose fault it is” thinking not increase your personal safety?
- “Background noise is just noise.” What information might “background noise” provide you? Can anyone give an example?
- “I was here first. It’s other people’s job to let me know if they are going to change something.” How does this myth differ from what really goes on? Whose job is it to protect you from changes in the work area?
- “If my foreman doesn’t tell me to do it, I don’t have to.” This myth defies logic. If your shoe is untied, what should you do?

Review and discussion

1. Suppose it’s your job to set several switchboard panels in place for a new service. What are some dangers, and how should you protect yourself?
2. Tomorrow, you have to pull several runs of 400 MCM cable. What can go wrong, and how can you protect yourself?
3. What are some dangers you might notice by quickly looking around before entering an equipment vault? How about a trench?

- Participant's Signature and Date***

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