Teamwork safety toolbox talk: building a safety culture

29 CFR 1904.35, 1926.20, 1926.21, 1904.36

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

If you saw a coworker about to get hurt, would you say something, and would they thank you for it?

Why it matters

Safety culture is how a crew really works when nobody is watching. Rules and training matter, but they work best when people look out for each other, speak up and report problems without fear. A strong safety culture is built one conversation at a time, by every person on the crew.

Key points

1. **Culture is what we do, not what we say**
   Safety rules on paper are only a start. Culture is whether we follow them when we are behind schedule, tired or out of sight of the boss. It shows up in small things, like doing the full equipment check, wearing PPE for a quick job and cleaning up as we go. Each of us adds to it or takes away from it every day.

2. **Be your brother's keeper**
   Being your brother's keeper means watching out for the people around you, not just yourself. If you see someone step into a blind spot, work near an edge without protection or reach toward a moving part, say something right away. A short, respectful 'Hey, hold up' can prevent a serious injury. When someone does it for you, thank them, even if you think you had it handled.

3. **Anyone can stop the job**
   If something looks wrong, anyone on the crew should feel free to stop the work and ask, from the newest helper to the foreman. Stopping for a few minutes costs far less than an injury. Leaders back this up by thanking the person who called stop, not by asking why the work slowed down.

4. **Report injuries and close calls**
   A close call is a free lesson, so report it the same day, along with every injury, even small ones. Under OSHA's recordkeeping rule, employers must set up a reasonable procedure for employees to report work-related injuries and illnesses promptly and accurately, and a procedure that would discourage a reasonable employee from reporting is not reasonable. Section 11(c) of the OSH Act also prohibits discriminating against an employee for reporting a work-related injury or illness (29 CFR 1904.36).
   29 CFR 1904.35(b)(1)

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5 **Leaders set the tone**

Crews copy what their leaders do. Foremen and supervisors build safety culture by wearing their own PPE, fixing reported hazards quickly and asking the crew for input before work starts. In construction, the employer must start and maintain the safety programs needed to meet OSHA's construction rules (29 CFR 1926.20(b)(1)). Those programs must provide for frequent and regular inspections of job sites, materials and equipment by competent persons the employer designates.

29 CFR 1926.20(b)(2)

6 **Help each other get trained**

Teamwork does not mean letting a buddy run a machine they have not been trained on. In construction, the employer may permit only employees qualified by training or experience to operate equipment and machinery. If you are asked to do a task you have not been trained for, say so. If a new crew member is struggling, show them the right way, not the fast way.

29 CFR 1926.20(b)(4)

Scenario

Picture this: A crew is racing to finish a concrete pour before rain moves in. A newer worker sees a coworker at the deck edge unclip from their lanyard to move a hose, but stays quiet because the coworker has many more years on the job. The foreman is busy on the phone, and nobody else seems to notice. What should the newer worker do, and what would make it easier for them to speak up?

Crew discussion

1. When did someone on a crew last stop you from doing something unsafe, and how did you react?
2. What makes it hard to speak up on a jobsite, and how can we make it easier here?
3. How do we report a close call on this job, and what happens after someone reports one?
4. What is one thing our leaders could do this week to show that safety comes first?

Bottom line **Safety culture is every one of us looking out for each other, speaking up and reporting problems, every day.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Safety culture / Cultura de seguridad

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____

Location / Lugar _____

Company / Empresa _____

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