TOOLBOX TALK #1

IMPROVE SAFETY WITH BEST PRACTICES

Everyone is responsible for creating a safe work environment. There are steps you can take to be successful in eliminating workplace injuries.

Develop a Safety Program
A comprehensive safety program has many components. Make sure your program includes the following parts:

1. *Solid management commitment-* Begin with a safety policy statement that stresses management's commitment to protect the health and safety of employees, customers and visitors. Share this document with all employees and have management review it periodically to reinforce their commitment and efforts. Clearly spell out objectives in a way that they are consistent with the overall mission of your organization – an efficient, effective and safe operation.
2. *Training-* Training, whether formal or informal, will improve safety performance. Educating your workforce about the importance of safety and any safety concerns helps protect them and establishes a safe workplace by increasing their knowledge and awareness of safety issues. Ongoing training and education will also help create and maintain a culture of safety. When you conduct safety training, always try to answer the question from the employee's point of view, "What's in it for me?" Conduct a needs analysis to determine the current skill and knowledge level of your employees, and to establish an acceptable skill, knowledge and competency level after training is completed. It is critical to create an environment that allows and encourages employees to put their new-found skills and knowledge to work in recognizing and then eliminating or controlling hazards. Safety begins on Day 1. Develop a safety orientation program for all new employees that covers safety topics such as incident reporting, proper lifting techniques, ergonomics and fleet safety.
3. *A Culture of Safety-* Having a workforce engaged and committed to safety is one of the best ways to improve your safety performance. Find ways to empower your workforce to identify and eliminate safety concerns. Most importantly, listen to and validate your employees' concerns, then take actions to address them.
4. *Enforcement of Safety Rules-* You implemented a safety program that addresses safety concerns and regulations. Ensure its success by enforcing it. Be sure to conduct regular workplace safety walkthroughs to identify possible safety hazards and resolve them before an incident occurs. If, during a walkthrough, you see an employee working in an unsafe manner, appropriately correct them. Emphasize the positives of proactive correction rather than the negatives of punishment for a rule violation. Be sure to document all safety discussions and walkthroughs you conduct and their results.
5. *Regular Safety Meetings-* Conducting safety meetings helps reinforce and encourage your workforce to adopt a culture of safety. Safety meetings provide a time and place to discuss any safety issues observed during a regular walkthrough and how to resolve those issues. Safety meetings can also provide a place for employees to communicate their ideas on where safety issues lie and how to address them. Everyone is expected to a safe environment. At any level of your organization there are things you can be doing better, whether that means closing file cabinet drawers all the way to eliminate a tripping hazard or properly grounding equipment to prevent electrical shock injuries.