Getting The Most Out Of The IUOE Toolbox Talks

Why were these talks developed?

Toolbox talks have been the main tool for communicating safety information on construction jobs for decades. Unfortunately, there has been almost no research on what makes for effective toolbox talks. The IUOE National Training Fund has worked with OSHA, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Lippy Group, LLC to make sure these Focus Four toolbox talks are based on the latest findings on the most effective design and tailored to the hazards operating engineers face daily. These toolbox talks accompany an entire package of training materials, but can be used alone. The way these are delivered is as important as how well they are designed.

What did NIOSH find out?

- Just handing out factsheets and toolbox talks to workers doesn't work. Providing copies after toolbox talks doesn't make much of an impact either.
- Using case studies (real life stories of accidents that ended in fatality or injury) in toolbox talks is effective.
- When toolbox talks containing case studies were accompanied by discussion questions to encourage group participation, they were more effective. Consequently, getting the workers to participate in the discussion about the case study is important. It's not enough to tell the story, it is better to have the workers engage in problem solving that analyzes why the accident occurred and how it could have been prevented. Active learning is always better than passive.

How should you deliver these toolbox talks?

1. Choose a topic that is related to work going on at the site.
2. Hold the meeting on the job, preferably where everyone can sit and relax.
3. Hold the meeting at the beginning of a shift or after a break. Folks are too tired at the end of a shift to carefully listen and they want to get home.
4. Read the toolbox talk sheet on the topic prior to conducting the talk.
5. Start at the top of the form and work right through to the end, which should take around 10 to 15 minutes. Guidance is provided in blue print to help you with each section.
6. Use the questions provided to generate discussions. Always allow time for the crew to respond to your questions before you provide an answer. Some suggested responses are written in italics.
7. Review the case study and emphasize that this was a real incident. Ask the crew for a case study before you review the one provided, however.
8. Always end with a discussion of the particular worksite where you are conducting the talk. Tie the talk as closely to hazards on the site as possible and encourage the crew to constantly look for and immediately correct hazards. They should also know how to report any problems that can't be immediately corrected.
9. Provide copies to each person, if you like, but NIOSH has not found that to be particularly effective.
10. Encourage workers to do similar talks on their sites and provide them with the IUOE phone number for ordering in bulk.
11. Have everyone sign the back of the form to indicate they attended this session and point out it is a pledge to look out for the health and safety of everyone on the site.

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What are the key features of these toolbox talks?

Consistent format to make teaching easier

Main headings are questions to get workers involved

There is always a case study with accompanying discussion questions

Suggested teaching techniques are in blue

The talks always end with a discussion on the hazards on the site; answers are in italics

There is space to include personal comments

FOCUS FOUR TOOLBOX TALKS

Module 2, Struck-by, Talk Number 5

How do we safely work around and secure loads?

[Ask the following questions and give time for answers.]

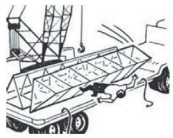
What are the hazards? Loads releasing onto workers from trucks or storage areas, materials dropped on workers while loading trucks or unstrapping loads

What are the results? Crushed or broken limbs, head injuries, amputations, death

What should we look for? Poorly stacked building materials, lopsided loads on trucks, loads not properly tied down, materials being lofted by cranes near work areas.

[Relate this incident or, better, one you know.]

Actual Incident: A 45-year-old crane operator died while rigging a load. A tractor-trailer driver unstrapped the load to ready it for lifting. The operator climbed onto the load during rigging and it rolled off the trailer and crushed him. The tractor-trailer driver was not at a meeting earlier that day where drivers were told that their loads had to be kept strapped.



[Ask the following question and ensure every item is covered.]

How do we prevent these results?

- ☐ Keep workers who are not involved in loading or unloading clear of loading areas.
- ☐ Load materials for maximum stability. Distribute weight evenly and keep materials level.
- ☐ Secure loads following safe and appropriate industry practices.
- ☐ Consider having a competent person inspect incoming freight to identify those that pose serious hazards during unloading.
- ☐ Nail 2x4 boards to the floor of cargo areas to secure equipment with wheels.
- ☐ Make sure cargo does not restrict driver's vision, free motion, exit from the vehicle, or access to emergency supplies.
- ☐ Stack and store materials with no more than a 4:1 height to base ratio and keep materials back from the edge.
- ☐ Perform rigging only if you are qualified. Choose the right equipment and inspect it prior to each use. Take defective rigging equipment out of service!

[Ask the following questions and solicit their own stories.]

Let's talk about this site now.

- ☐ Has anyone seen any practices on this site that may have posed a risk from a load?
- ☐ Does anyone know the safety factor needed for chains used to lift loads? *(4:1)*
- ☐ Are the materials on this site stored properly? What can we improve?
- ☐ Have the loads coming on our site been properly secured?

[Record questions below that you want to ask about this site.]

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