



Daily Toolbox Talk: Continue Learning Thursday May 4, 2023

The construction industry is filled with people of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. How do we unite and collaborate so our strong voices help us make safe choices? Sharing lessons learned on innovations to a common issue or streamlining a task to make it safer and more efficient will allow us to continually learn and improve our overall safety.

An interactive demonstration aimed at improving knowledge of how to perform specific tasks safely is one way. Seeking out experienced crew members to help lead these discussions and demonstrations is another. Inviting outside speakers to share insights and presentations and encouraging participation from all in attendance is one more. Make these demonstrations and presentations interactive, educational, and fun.

Whether you lead one of these activities or have another type of demonstration, know that we can use these visual, hands-on, and interactive lessons to make safe choices.

- Safety Helmet Demonstration: Have you made the switch yet? Many companies are implementing the use of helmets rather than hard hats. Why is it a good idea? Lead a discussion on the history of the hard hat, current head injury statistics, and why much of the industry is moving toward better head protection.

DID YOU KNOW? Construction workers sustain more traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) than employees at any other type of workplace in the U.S. TBIs represent one-quarter of all construction fatalities, and more than half of fatal work-related traumatic injuries are a result of falls.

Safety helmets dramatically reduce the frequency and severity of TBIs due to their retention systems and ability to protect against lateral impact and penetration.

If your company has already adopted the use of helmets, ask your crews, “Why are you glad to be wearing a safety helmet rather than a traditional hardhat?” If your company is still considering whether to change, ask, “What, if anything, are your reservations about safety helmets?” and reach out for more information.

- Workplace Fatigue Awareness, Mental Health, and Nutrition: Let’s talk about our health and wellness by inviting outside speakers, nutritionists, wellness coaches, or personal trainers. Focus on the realities of our work, which can include long hours, long commutes, and shift work. What practical steps can we take to improve our mental and physical health? If you offer an Employee Assistance Program, let your team members know all the benefits offered.
- De-escalation Techniques and Situational Awareness: How can we create a culture of caring? Invite experts in crisis prevention, mental health, and suicide prevention to share practical methods to offer supportive and compassionate responses to someone in need.
- Equipment Inspection: Set up a variety of equipment on your site. Break into groups and choose key crew members to lead a discussion on daily inspections. What should be inspected? How is an effective inspection conducted? How is it documented? What is the protocol to follow when an issue is discovered? This is a great discussion to hold for

operators and non-operators alike, so be sure to cover some of the most critical items.

- **Environmental Safety and Protection:** What are the most common environmental concerns on your project site? How are they managed? What are the potential impacts if we don't properly control them? Host an interactive discussion on environmental protection and mitigation measures. Cover basic elements of SWPPP, dust, noise, and wildlife requirements. Invite guest speakers.
- **Emergency Action Planning:** What do we do if...? Do your team members know what to do in an emergency? Whether it's a fire, flood, tornado, hurricane, or any other type of emergency, now is a good time to review your plan. Host discussions on potential emergencies that could arise and what protocols to follow. Consider planning a mock drill after your demonstration.
- **Line of Fire Awareness:** Evaluate past injuries or near misses. Review the most likely line-of-fire injury potential on your site and how you are mitigating it. Host discussions with experienced team members. Encourage your crews to search out other line-of-fire potential and reward them for their discoveries.
- **Traffic Safety:** Working in the public right-of-way can be extremely dangerous. This is a great time to review the fundamentals of traffic safety. Set up a demonstration of traffic control. Review best practices—lead discussions by experienced crew members or outside presenters. Encourage open discussions on the realities of your current work and what improvements can be made to protect crews from traffic hazards.
- **Fall Protection Demonstration:** This week is also OSHA's Fall Safety Stand-Down Week, so let's join efforts to make our projects and workers safer. OSHA and their partners, including NIOSH and CPWR, have lots of tools available at www.stopconstructionfalls.com. Falls remain a leading cause of fatalities in construction. Set up a demonstration on PFAS (Personal Fall Arrest System) fundamentals. Lead interactive demonstrations on proper harness fitment, inspection, and use as well as lanyard selection (do you know what edge rated means?), limitations, and fall clearance requirements. Review how to select proper anchorage points. You may even perform a controlled drop with a mannequin or invite a local vendor or distributor out for a fall protection demonstration. They are eager to help us and support our efforts to keep workers safe.

Use today's discussion to identify what you can do to keep up with your construction education. Even if it's a refresher of what you already know, we're never too old or too experienced to take safety for granted. Take today's message and lessons home to your families and communities. Sharing is another way we have strong voices and make safe choices in construction.

