

Construction safety: importance of toolbox talks



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There are no legal requirements or OSHA regulations that require construction contractors to hold toolbox talks. That being said, conducting regular toolbox talks — whether daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly — can help you comply with health and safety laws, including OSHA’s standards.

For Example, in Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 1926 for Construction, 1926.21(b)(2) states that “[t]he employer shall instruct each employee in the recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions and the regulations applicable to his work environment to control or eliminate any hazards or other exposure to illness or injury.” While toolbox talks are not officially considered “safety training,” they can be helpful as a best practice that supports a company’s safety training program.

Consistently delivering safety messages reinforces the company’s safety program and reinforces to employees that safety is important to the management of that company. Regular toolbox talks on issues that have to do with the work being done on a particular project can help reduce the risk of workplace injuries and resulting legal claims for the company. Moreover, evidence that specific employees participated in certain toolbox talks can benefit the company in the event that the employee is injured on a construction project and claims that the company was not complying with specific safety regulations or providing proper training to employees.

Here are 5 tips for effective toolbox talks for your company:

1. Keep it short. The toolbox talk should take no more than 10 minutes.

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2. Focus on a topic that is relevant to the work being performed that day or that week.
3. Allow employees to ask questions.
4. Cover changes to the work site or working conditions.
5. Keep a record of the employees that attended.