



Giving Safety Talks

A guide for the construction sector

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK



Alberta Workforce Essential Skills Society

Versatile Collaborative Precise Responsive People-Centered

Giving Safety Talks: A guide for the construction sector

- Facilitator Guide
- Participant Workbook
- Self-Directed Guide
- 50 Safety Posters

This resource has been written for safety supervisors, team leads and other staff responsible for delivering safety training within the construction sector. There are three manuals which provide information, tools, tips and practice opportunities for delivering better safety training.

The Facilitator Guide and Participant Workbook can be used to deliver one or two 3-hour train-the-trainer workshops.

The Self-Directed Guide is useful for smaller organizations which may not have the capacity, time or training dollars to hire a workshop trainer.

Each of the manuals can be used in conjunction with the set of 50 Safety Posters depicting different safety topics.

This resource was developed to be used in organizations with workers whose first language is not English.

Facilitator Guide and Participant Workbook

These manuals aim to increase an organization's capacity to deliver more effective and engaging safety talks, and they work best when they are used together with the 50 Safety Posters.

To request a workshop, to download the PDF versions, or to order copies of the manuals, please visit the AWES website: www.awes.ca

Self-Directed Guide

This manual was written for smaller organizations as an independent study for staff interested in delivering more effective and engaging safety talks. It can be used with the 50 Safety Posters. To download the PDF version or to order copies of the manual and the safety posters, please visit the AWES website: www.awes.ca

50 Safety Posters

Fifty highly visual safety posters representing hot topics relevant to the construction industry were developed with plain language teaching points and tips on the back, to aid safety trainers. To download the PDF versions or to order copies of the safety posters, please visit the AWES website: www.awes.ca

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Alberta Workforce Essential Skills (AWES) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a competent, adaptable and innovative workforce through workplace essential skills initiatives.

Learning goals

The goal of all safety training is to prevent accidents and injuries. Being a better communicator of safety is central to achieving that goal. Therefore, for those tasked with raising the safety skills of workers in the construction sector, this training has three main learning goals:

- Strengthen your presentation skills through these learning resources and tools.
- Remove your presentation “blind spots” through real-time feedback from fellow participants and trainers.
- Advance the “culture of safety” in your workplace by enabling you to be a better communicator.

Workshop activities

Part 1: The Quick-and-Dirty on Safety Talks (3 hours) 3

Activity 1	Introductions	4
Activity 2	Brainstorming	5
Activity 3	Being Clear, Coherent and Concise	6
Activity 4	Setting Goals	8
Activity 5	Preparing. Opening. Delivering. Closing.	10
Activity 6	Talk 1	11

Part 2: Better Safety Talks (3 hours) 15

Activity 7	The 3-30-3 Outline	15
Activity 8	Talk 2	17
Activity 9	Plain Language	19
Activity 10	Talk 3	21
Activity 11	Reviewing Goals	24

Tools and Tip Sheets

Tool 1	Safety Talk Skills Checklist	25
Tool 2	Body Language and Speech Quality Checklist	26
Tip Sheet 1	Giving Safety Talks	27
Tip Sheet 2	Learning Styles	28
Tip Sheet 3	Using Open-Ended Question	29
Tip Sheet 4	Using Closed-Ended Question	30
Tip Sheet 5	Dealing with Disruptions	31
Tip Sheet 6	Bridging Communication Gaps	32
Tip Sheet 7	Bridging Cultural Gaps	33
Tip Sheet 8	Building Cultural Intelligence	34
Tip Sheet 9	Creating Understanding	35

Part 1

The Quick-and-Dirty on Safety Talks

Like any quick-and-dirty solution, part 1 is a “how to” overview of skills for safety talks. Part 2 goes into more detail. For part 1, you will:

- Build your purpose for enhancing your safety talk skills
- Identify what is essential in the 4 stages of a talk
- Practice talks to get real-time feedback from fellow participants and trainers
- Identify your blind spots
- Obtain strategies to close your blind spots



Activity 1 Introductions

Introduce yourself to the workshop trainer and fellow-participants by giving your name and your organization.

Then answer either of the following prompts in a minute or less:

- Describe of one of the better safety talks you participated in.
- What is the worst injury or incident in the workplace that you have witnessed, experienced or heard about? What happened?



Activity 2 Brainstorming on Credibility

Learning goal

To start the process of reflecting on what makes a speaker credible to the construction sector, and to think about what aspects of credibility you need to develop.



Safety talks

Safety talks happen at weekly or monthly general safety meetings with all employees, as well as during toolbox talks and tailgate meetings with teams at the start of shifts. Wherever a safety talk happens, the speaker needs credibility to gain the trust and attention of the listeners. Credibility doesn't have a recipe. How you create it varies depending on the occupations, organizations and teams you are working with. However, credibility is a critical factor in ensuring that safety is transferred from the meeting to the workplace.

Instructions

Work in pairs or groups. Read the list of qualities that build the credibility of a safety talk speaker. In the box, put a check mark (✓) next to the top five that you think are most critical for establishing credibility in your workplace context. At the end of the list, make a note of any additional aspects that are also essential to building the credibility of the speaker.

Clarity – speaks clearly with clear purpose and clear word choices	
Coherence – speaks coherently (well-organized, key points and transitioning words e.g. first)	
Conciseness – speaks concisely, stays on topic and eliminates the unnecessary details	
Speech quality – uses good speed and volume with limited interjections, such as “um” “ah”	
Preparation – comes across as well-prepared	
Body language – uses good eye contact, facial expression etc.	
Rapport – connects with the audience to gain their trust and attention	
Expertise – knowledgeable and experienced in the safety content of the talk	
Other...	

Activity 3 Being Clear, Coherent and Concise

Learning goal

To structure thoughts and communication in a linear order.

Linear communication

To communicate effectively in a safety talk, you should follow the following general guidelines:

- **Be clear.** Choose the simplest words and concepts, and limit complexity whenever possible.
- **Be coherent.** Organize your ideas into specific points. Start with the main point such as what you want people to know or do at the end of the talk. Then transition clearly from one point to the next, using markers like “first”, “next” etc.
- **Be concise.** Get to the point quickly. Eliminate the unnecessary. Stick to the time limit.



Instructions

- Work in pairs.
- Sit back-to-back.
- One person will describe a picture of a specific shape, without showing the partner the actual drawing. Make sure you sit on your hands so that you only have your oral communication (no non-verbals like gestures).
- The other person will draw what he or she hears, without looking at the original picture. Use the box below.
- You have 4 minutes to complete the activity.
- When you are finished, compare the original with the drawing. Discuss ways that the communication could be improved, in terms of being clear, coherent and concise.
- Change roles. Do the activity again using the next picture from your trainer.

Drawing

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing. It occupies the central portion of the page.

Activity 4 Setting Goals

Learning goal

To clarify your specific learning goals.

Instructions

Work in pairs or groups to answer questions 1 through 4. These are short brainstorming discussions of a couple of minutes each.

From the discussions, write down responses, ideas and comments that are relevant to your workplace and role.



1. The role of safety talks How do safety talks contribute to better safety on the job?		2. The common gaps What are the common gaps in safety talks that limit their effectiveness?	
3. My organization's safety talks Identify three practices that your organization should keep, stop and start doing in their safety talks?			
"keep doing" e.g. starting on time	"stop doing" e.g. putting in too much info	"start doing" e.g. engaging the audience more	

Tip: The aim

Becoming a slick public speaker is not the goal; instead aim to advance a culture of safety at work. Aim for engaging talks that get workers to bring safety from the safety meeting into the workplace.

Activity 4 Setting Goals for the Workshop

4. My team's safety on the job Identify three practices your team should keep, stop and start doing for safety on the job?		
"keep doing" e.g. using PPE	"stop doing" e.g. allowing small infractions	"start doing" e.g. getting better follow through on safety by other trades we work with
5. Workshop goals Immediate workshop goal – Use the learning you have received through the activities and feedback so far to develop two or more personal learning goals for this workshop. Post-workshop goal – Use your answers from questions 1 to 4 to identify one change, in job safety or in how safety is communicated in your organization or team, that you could initiate through your future safety talks.		
Immediate workshop goal 1. 2.		Post-workshop goal 1.

Tip: The approach
 Give clear, concise and coherent safety messages. Eliminate the unnecessary. That means simple language. To the point. And logically organized.

Activity 5 Preparing. Opening. Delivering. Closing.

Learning goal

To identify stages and processes for giving safety talks that enable better control over your messages.

The four stages

A safety talk is made up of at least four stages. First, the planning, which means putting down on paper what you need to communicate. Second, the opening in the first few minutes of the safety talk, to cover introductions and general housekeeping items. Third, delivering the core content. And last, a short closing to wrap up the safety talk.

Question

From your experience, what are three practices essential to each of the four stages of a safety talk? Work in pairs or in four groups to brainstorm answers and write them in the boxes below.

<p>Planning e.g. knowing your audience</p>	<p>Opening e.g. connecting with audience</p>
<p>Delivery e.g. using transition words such as first, next etc.</p>	<p>Closing e.g. summing up</p>



Global Facts

The Global OHS facts from the *International Labour Organization, Geneva*, are listed below.

“Across the globe, there are some 270 million occupational accidents each year.”

“Each day, there are an average of 6, 000 fatalities due to work-related accidents or diseases. This totals more than 2.2 million deaths a year. About 350, 000 are from workplace accidents, 1.7 million are work-related disease, and 158, 000 are commuting accidents.”

“Each year, workers suffer about 270 million occupational accidents that lead to work absences of 3 days or more.”

Activity 6 Talk 1: Using the posters for a 45-second talk

Learning goal

To get real time feedback from fellow participants to identify areas for growth through first impressions of your presentation skills.

The safety posters

The workplace safety posters are an easy-to-use resource for safety talks. They address common safety issues in the workplace, such as fatigue, housekeeping, eye protection and proper lifting. On the front of the poster is an image showing the safety topic for discussion. On the back are facts, tips, and questions to teach and engage the audience. All the posters are available on the AWES website.

Task 1: Be the safety talk presenter

Choose one of the safety posters to give a 45-second presentation.

Take 5 minutes to read through the information on the back of the poster.

Make notes on the main point you want to speak on. It has to be short.

You will stand in front of the other participants and deliver a 45-second safety talk on the safety topic.

Your fellow participants will use CHART 1 below to make notes as they listen to you present your safety talk. They will give you feedback at the end of 45 seconds. Make sure you record their comments in CHART 2, on the following page.

Task 2: Be the evaluator

You are going to evaluate your fellow participants using CHART 1 below. For this task, use the general criteria of a good safety talk that has emerged so far in the workshop. Use the “Peer-Evaluation Chart” to make notes as you listen to other participants present their 45-second talks. You will give your feedback to each person at the end of the talk.



Tip: The focus

Eliminate the unnecessary – build your talk around what the audience needs to know and/or do.

Tip: Get feedback

Use the “keep-stop-start” method to regularly seek direct feedback from colleagues. Use their feedback to further improve your skills.

Activity 6 Talk 1: Using the posters for a 45-second talk

Chart 1: Peer-Evaluation

What should the speaker keep, stop and start doing?

“keep doing”	“stop doing”	“start doing”

Activity 6 Talk 1: Using the posters for a 45-second talk

Chart 2: Notes

What are the areas that your team identified for you to develop?

“keep doing”	“stop doing”	“start doing”

Part 2

Better Safety Talks

Part 2 goes into more detail by utilizing a clear outline for safety talks, and exploring body language and voice quality. For part 2, you will:

- Use the 3-30-3 Outline approach to structure a safety talk clearly, coherently and concisely
- Practice talks to get real time feedback from fellow-participants and trainers
- Apply better body language techniques
- Adjust voice quality
- Use checklists to target your learning curve



Activity 7 The 3-30-3 Outline

Learning goal

To use the 3-30-3 Outline for more targeted and streamlined safety talks.

3-30-3 Outline

The 3-30-3 Outline is a easy-to-use strategy to plan your presentation. It makes it quick and to the point. The 3-30-3 Outline asks three questions:

- If I had only 3 seconds to speak, what would I say?
- If I had another 30 seconds, what points best support that main point?
- If I had an extra 3 minutes, how would I expand each point?

3-30-3 is a communication habit – a way of organizing information – so that the information is always clear (in plain language), concise (to the point) and coherent (logically ordered).

When you answer the three questions during planning, you create a framework to “hang” your safety information on. In fact, it is a good framework to use when you have to give updates or impromptu talks. Take a look at the explanation beneath each question.



Tip: Transition clearly

Use clear transition words such as first, next, lastly, to move from one point to the next. Also, repeat key words and terms and concepts.

3-30-3 Framework

3	30	3
If I had only 3 seconds to speak, what would I say?	If I had another 30 seconds, what points best support that main point?	If I had an extra 3 minutes, how would I expand each point?
<p>Main point The answer becomes the main point of your safety talk. This question, under such short time, focuses everything to the core message. You could also ask it this way: what does my audience need to know and/ or do, once the talk is over? It makes your purpose clear.</p>	<p>Supporting points The answers give the supporting points to your main point. If you break it down to 3 points, you would have 10 seconds to state each point. Clearly ordered supporting points make your talk coherent – arranged logically instead of muddled up.</p>	<p>Body This is the “how”. This question helps set out the body, or core content, of your safety talk. It gives you 60 seconds to expand on each of your 3 supporting points. During a real time safety talk, you would naturally extend or limit the time, and fill your content with examples, visuals, demonstrations, stories etc. By limiting your time in the planning stage, you can eliminate the unnecessary details, which makes your talk concise, or to-the-point.</p>

Activity 7 The 3-30-3 Outline

Task 1

The following five sentences form the working outline for a safety talk on the topic of WHMIS labels. Put each sentence into the box that best matches its position in a safety talk. Write only the number down.

Task 2

After you have ordered them, underline the transition words that shift from one idea to the next. There are at least eight transition words and/or phrases.

Outline for WHMIS label safety talk

1. And just as important, you, the worker, are responsible for two critical activities. First, make sure you understand the information on the WHMIS label. That means reviewing the MSDS sheets when necessary. And second, report to me or another supervisor when a label is unreadable or has been removed or defaced. It is not just your safety but also the person working with you that matters.
2. I would like to revisit WHMIS labels in this safety talk, with the main point of making sure you know exactly what you are accountable for as the worker.
3. To start, and simply put, suppliers have to obtain, apply and update the labels to their containers. That is their job.
4. As the employer, we need to ensure all containers of controlled products that enter this workplace are labelled properly. That means obtaining supplier labels when there are none or creating workplace labels as required.
5. First, we will do a quick review of the supplier's responsibilities. Then, the labeling responsibilities of the management team here, meaning your employer. That will make it clear to finally look at your two main responsibilities as a worker on this team.

Main point: # _____		
Supporting point: # _____		
Body: Supporting point 1 # _____	Body: Supporting point 2 # _____	Body: Supporting point 3 # _____

Activity 8 Talk 2: Using the posters for a 90-second talk

Learning goal

To use body language and voice quality more intentionally to give more effective safety talks.

Task 1

Read through the tables on the following page. Discuss each of the qualities. Which are you good at and which do you want to develop?

Also, make sure you read through Tool 1: Safety Talk Skills Checklist and Tool 2: Body Language and Speech Quality Checklist at the back of this resource. Use them as the evaluation tool for this 90-second talk.

Task 2

1. Choose a new topic from the safety posters to present a safety talk.
2. Take 10 minutes to prepare a 90-second talk that is clear, concise and coherent.
3. Use the 3-30-3 framework to outline your talk.
4. Your fellow-participants will assess you using Tool 1: Safety Talk Skills Checklist and Tool 2: Body Language and Speech Quality Checklist. The checklists are at the back of this resource.
5. Make notes on the checklists as you observe your fellow participants give their talks. After their talk, provide them with “keep,” “stop” and “start doing” feedback.



Tip: Less is more

Less is more. Don't try to pack too much into a safety talk. Instead focus on a few specific points and aim for high transference of knowledge into the workplace.

Activity 8 Talk 2: Using the posters for a 90-second talk

Body language	
<p>Eyes Make eye contact with everyone across the audience. Avoid focusing on one person or staring down at the floor.</p>	<p>Expression Keep your facial expression confident, friendly and open, but focused by staying on task and on time.</p>
<p>Gesture Use arms and hands to strengthen and support your words and ideas. Make sure your gestures have an impact, but try not to be distracting.</p>	<p>Spatial command Stand up straight, be relaxed. Appear calm and collected. Avoid fidgeting or slouching.</p>

Speech quality		
<p>Speed Speak at a moderate speed so that listeners can process ideas.</p>	<p>Rhythm Vary your voice pitch with high and low inflections by stressing key words in a sentence.</p>	<p>Interjections Limit interjections such as sighs, um, ah, like etc.</p>
<p>Pause Use well-placed pauses to chunk information into thought groups. It is easier to process in the brain.</p>	<p>Tone Mood is set through tone – the words you select and the emotion in your voice. Create a positive, open and optimistic mood.</p>	<p>Repetition Avoid unnecessary repetition of words, phrases and sentences unless to emphasize or remind.</p>
<p>Volume Speak loud enough for everyone to hear clearly.</p>	<p>Clarity Pronounce your words clearly by moderating your speaking speed.</p>	<p>Compensation strategies If you go blank, or get stuck, just pause. Think. Look at your notes. Give the group a quick task. Tell a story. But limit your interjections and repetition. It happens to everyone. Relax.</p>

Activity 9 Plain Language: Closing language and literacy gaps

What is plain language?

Plain language is the skill of adjusting your oral and written communication to fit the audience it is being delivered to. Rather than over-simplifying and losing the original meaning in your message, plain language should make the message clearer through careful word choices and sentence structures. By doing this, everyone understands the information and expectations better, especially in safety talks.

In plain language, speakers will:

- use concrete and familiar words
- explain new terms and occupational jargon
- organize ideas in a logical order

Not every word or sentence can be put into plain language. Use your discretion – some terms and concepts defy rewriting. In these situations, better visuals, definitions or even language translation could be used to support understanding.

Ultimately, plain language contributes significantly to a safer and more inclusive team culture.

When to use plain language?

Speaking and writing with plain language is crucial in low literacy or low English-speaking contexts. It is useful for both written and oral public communications, from safety talks to safety bulletins, memos, instructions and procedures. Where could plain language be applied more effectively in your organization?



Activity 10 Talk 3: A 2-minute Talk on Addressing Safety Hazards

Learning goal

Develop word choices and strategies for speaking up to address safety hazards.

Safety hazards and workers with low English skills

The only approach to take with hazards is to prevent or control them. As a supervisor, it can be easier to address safety hazards that others are causing. However, when you are on a team or with other sub-trades, speaking up might not be so easy.

Speaking up to address hazards is even more difficult if English is not your first language. Certain cultural norms can also make it challenging to confront or correct co-workers. Some newcomers to Canada originate from workplace cultures where subordinates do not speak up to more senior or experienced colleagues, even if the issue is safety.

The best way to close language and cultural gaps on a team is by raising awareness through open and respectful discussions about these issues. Give newcomers suggestions on what to say. Establish open communication on your teams so that people feel free to speak up. Tip Sheets 6 to 9, at the back of this resource, are short information sheets that can facilitate open discussion on a diverse team to close communication and cultural gaps. Work as a team to set guidelines for addressing hazards.

Task

1. Read through Addressing Safety Hazards and Low English Skills as a Safety Hazard on the following pages.
2. Add your own points, thoughts, stories and ideas, about addressing safety issues, to the sheets. You need to make the sheets your own.
3. Take 10 minutes to prepare a 90-second talk that is clear, concise and coherent.
4. Use the 3-30-3 framework to outline your talk.
5. You will be assessed on the clarity, conciseness and coherence of the safety talk using the checklists on the following pages.
6. Your fellow participants will also give you feedback on your body language and voice quality.

Use Tip Sheets 6 to 9 at the back of this resource to help develop your presentation. If trust and rapport are essential for cultivating a culture of safety on a team, how do you build these on a culturally-diverse team?



Addressing Safety Hazards

Definitions

- Addressing safety hazards means telling partners or co-workers that they are not following safe practice or procedure. Addressing safety hazards caused by others is different to reporting near misses, incidents and accidents, or doing field-level hazards assessments.
- It means speaking up out of concern for the person's well-being, as well as for yours and the team's safety.
- Sometimes, it requires confronting another person. You may not know the person, but their lack of safety puts others at risk.

Why talk about safety hazards?

It is good to discuss openly and set out guidelines together as a team for telling co-workers or other trades and clients that they are not following safe practice or procedure.

- Intimidation. Some people are more easily intimidated by more experienced or senior workers, by more confrontational or closed people.
- Culture. In some cultures, "saving face", yours or mine, is more important than speaking up to address a safety issue.
- Due diligence. People, environment, tools and materials are always changing.
- Law. OHS can shut down a job site at any time. They can visit a job site 24/7. They don't take ignorance as reasonable defense.

The best way to prevent or control hazards is to speak up when you see them.

How to speak up!

Use the following strategies for speaking up.

- Reminder. "Hey buddy, you forgot your glasses."
- Suggestion. "Hey man, it's good practice to wear your glasses."
- Ask. "Hey buddy, could you wear your glasses. There are a lot of rookies around here who do what you model."
- Advise. "Hey bud, it's good practice to wear your glasses. Those sunglasses won't help you when the wind kicks that sawdust up."
- Code. "Hey man, OHS code is pretty clear: wear your glasses."
- Warning. "You need to wear your glasses. Otherwise, for your safety and mine, I will need to say something to the foreman. "

Failing this, the person may need to be reported.

Ask

Have you ever seen a co-worker fail to follow through on safety? Have you ever wanted to say something, but didn't? Did you ever feel awkward having to address someone else's poor safety habit?

Tip

Talk as a team about the best and worst ways to tell a co-worker or sub-trades he or she is not working safely.

Do a quick role play of what you should and shouldn't say.

Example

A worker up in the Oil Sands developed a pain in his back. He told his supervisor that he was not fit for work, that his inability to move properly was a hazard to his partner and the team. The supervisor said he was exaggerating and should get back to work. He went home. The company laid him off.

WCB arrived shortly after that and shut the job down for 3 months. All the other trades were now on hold until all the supervisors completed a "leadership for safety excellence" workshop. Lesson learned: listen when someone speaks up to address a safety hazard.

Low English Skills as a Safety Hazard

Definitions

- Newcomers to Canada make up an important part of the labour force in the construction sector. Some of those newcomers may not have enough English skills to understand everything related to safety on the job site. Continued labour shortages make this an ongoing reality for the construction sector.
- Low English skills, or even cultural differences, can compromise safety at times. They can be a safety hazard. Controlling low English skills, if they are a safety hazard, is important. It is also important to support newcomers as they learn English and grow in their knowledge and practice of workplace safety in Canada.

Why think about low English skills as a safety hazard?

This approach to controlling hazards is not meant to single out workers with low English skills, or to put them at a disadvantage. Instead, it is simply a process to make sure that all hazards are addressed and controlled whenever possible.

How to use the Hierarchy of Controls

Use the Hierarchy of Controls as a way to assess a work scenario that has workers with low English.

First rank the severity of the hazard (language barriers) i.e. imminent danger, serious, minor, or not applicable.

Second, rank the probability of the specific incident occurring i.e. probable, reasonably probable, remote, extremely remote.

Then apply the Hierarchy of Controls:

- **Eliminate:** First try to eliminate the hazard completely e.g. reallocate an English-speaking worker to do the job.
- **Substitute:** If elimination is not possible, pair the worker up with a co-worker who speaks English and the newcomer's first language. Or, if that is not possible, pair the newcomer up with an English-speaking co-worker who can speak in plain English and use patience to reduce safety risks.
- **Administrative controls:** Provide the newcomer with the right training in safety, English and/or workplace culture, and enough of it. This could be through coaching, mentoring, in-house courses or training at the right schools. Use more supervisor follow ups on work e.g. checklists, face-to-face reporting with open-ended questions (see Tip Sheets 3 and 4).
- **Equipment controls:** Use electronic tools such as dictionaries and iPad Apps for translation as the last line of defense. Try to keep English as the language of work at all times unless someone has been appointed to act as permanent translator for an individual or a team of non-English speakers.

Ask

Have you ever worked with someone who had low English skills? Did you ever think the communication gap might cause problems with safety? How did you limit the potential safety concerns? What happened?

Tip

Use Tip Sheet 6 and 7 to identify ways to keep communication gaps closed.

Example

Many newcomers come from work backgrounds where "saving face" is part of the workplace culture. They may not like confronting or disagreeing with supervisors directly. They might not like to say they don't understand. Instead, they will "save face" by communicating indirectly. They might use silence, or body language. They might laugh or breathe heavily. They might walk away and try to figure it out alone. Use Tip Sheets 3 and 4, 6 and 7 with your teams to make sure you close the gaps that lead to safety issues.

Activity 11 Reviewing Goals

Learning goal

Define the specific areas for personal development, as well as for your organization's culture of safety.

Task

Throughout this workshop you have identified strengths and gaps in your own safety talks and in your organization or team's culture of safety. Now review your notes and the feedback you have received in the workshop. Complete the table below.

My Safety Talks: Make a note of the areas you are going to focus on to give better safety talks in the workplace.

The Culture of Safety: Identify areas for improvement in your organization and/or team that will enhance the culture of safety in your workplace. Think of areas for improvement that you could address using your newly advanced skills in giving safety talks. Write them in the columns below. Make changes where necessary. Add new thoughts that you have had through this training.



My goals

	Keep doing	Stop doing	Start doing
My Safety Talks			
The Culture of Safety			

Questions

Will the culture of safety in your workplace affect your safety talks?

Will your safety talks affect the culture of safety at work?

Safety Talk Skills Checklist

Tool 1

Opening	Keep doing	Start doing	Additional comments
Introductions – does necessary introductions			
Topic – gives title or topic of the safety talk			
Main point – frontloads main point clearly			
Accountability – connects the main point with the group			
Outline – sets out the supporting points			
Rapport – connects with the audience			

Delivery	Keep doing	Start doing	Additional comments
Personalizes – uses life experience to explain points			
Demonstrates – uses actions or activities to explain points			
Repeats – repeats key points, terms and concepts			
Participates – involves group during the talk			
Transitions – uses markers to transition between ideas			
Imparts confidence – avoids self-deprecation			
Speaks clearly			
Speaks concisely			
Speaks coherently			
Respects – respects audience's time			

Closing	Keep doing	Start doing	Additional comments
Summary – restates the main point			
Accountability – restates the application into the workplace			

Body Language and Speech Quality Checklist

Tool 2

Body language	Keep doing	Start doing	Additional comments
Eyes – makes eye contact across the audience			
Gesture – strengthens and supports speaking			
Expression – confident, friendly, focused and open			
Spatial command – relaxed, calm, collected			
Other...			

Speech quality	Keep doing	Start doing	Additional comments
Speed – speaks at a moderate speed			
Pause – uses well-placed pauses			
Volume – speaks loud enough for everyone to hear			
Rhythm – varies speech pitch with inflection and intonation			
Tone – creates a positive, open and optimistic mood			
Clarity – pronounces words clearly			
Interjections – limits interjections (like, sighs, um, ah)			
Repetitions – avoids unnecessary repetitions			
Compensation strategies – uses effective strategies			
Other...			

Giving Safety Talks

Tip Sheet 1

The aim

Becoming a slick public speaker is not the goal; instead aim to advance a culture of safety at work. Aim for engaging talks that get high transference of safety from the safety meeting into the workplace.

The approach

Give clear, concise and coherent safety messages. Eliminate the unnecessary. That means simple language. To the point. And logically organized.

The focus

Eliminate the unnecessary – build your talk around what the audience needs to know and/or do.

Get feedback

Use the “keep-stop-start” method to regularly seek direct feedback from colleagues. Use their feedback to further improve your skills.

Transition clearly

Use clear transition words such as first, next, lastly, to move from one point to the next. Also, repeat key words, terms and concepts.

Less is more

Less is more. Don’t try to pack too much into a safety talk. Instead focus on a few specific points and aim for high transference of knowledge into the workplace.

Eliminate stage fright

You can control stage fright because it is rooted in the following non-reality: “Someone else can deliver exactly the same safety talk better than you, and score a 10 out of 10. No mistakes. No slips ups.” We know there is no such person. No one is a 10. Every speaker walks away doing it better the next time. Your cure for stage fright maybe unique, but you can start with the following:

- Prep well. Practice the talk out loud beforehand. It will boost your confidence when you stand before the audience.
- Recognize it but don’t feed it. Stage fright feels real but can be controlled. Put yourself mentally ahead 5 minutes in your talk. The first few minutes of a talk can be tough as you are trying to find your “groove,” or natural flow of thought. Once you are past those first few minutes, you find your flow.
- Be realistic. There are no perfect 10s. Stop thinking “me” and focus your thoughts on “them,” the audience. You are giving the safety talk to guide and enable them to not get hurt or hurt others. It is not about you.
- Many ways, many talks. There is no one way to give a talk. Yours is one way. Focus on figuring out the best way in that moment with that audience. It will likely be done differently next time.
- Build your credibility in your own mind so that you feel “qualified” to speak.
- Use notes. Have an outline on paper that you can turn to if you lose focus.
- Seek feedback. Be open to improving by getting feedback from trusted co-workers.

Build rapport

People don’t really care how much you know until they know how much you care. Care has to do with how much you actually care about your topic, your work and the people.

A safety talk begins days and months before you stand in front of people. The credibility you have with your audience comes from how you model what you want them to practice. It is not just what you practice, but how you practice it with them daily. And at a deeper more effective level, do you know the people?

It was said that the reason people followed a mad man like Napoleon is because he knew the first names of more than a thousand of his soldiers at any time. Building rapport is just as vital as building credibility.

Recognizing Learning Style

Tip Sheet 2

These are the three most recognized learning styles. Although everyone has a preference for one, the best learning occurs when we engage people using more than one style. Use all three styles in your safety talks.

Learning style	Definition	Ways to engage
Auditory	Learn best by hearing. Auditory learners often talk aloud to process information. They can be easily distracted. They have difficulty with written instructions, preferring to talk through the steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud. • Repeat key points. • Make time for open or group discussions. • Get them to repeat back to you. • Use personal stories.
Visual	Learn best by seeing. Visual learners observe first rather than act or talk. They are organized in their approach to tasks. Their mind may stray during verbal discussions. They find verbal instructions difficult, preferring to see it on paper or in a drawing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide handouts, memos, pictures. • Use PowerPoint for formal meetings, with large font and lots of white space. • Be colour-coded and be strategic with various fonts and sizes. • Allow time for note-taking. • Demonstrate the point in front of them.
Kinesthetic	Learn best by touching, doing and moving. Kinesthetic learners like to solve learning problems by physically working through them. They will try new things are outgoing by nature. They are tactile, preferring to touch objects and people as they engage them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get them to physically demonstrate it, touch the object, engage the point in some physical way.

Using Open-Ended Questions

Tip Sheet 3

Open-ended questions ask for experience, opinion, reflection and application. They cannot be answered in one word. They encourage more information and deeper thought from your audience. Use the following examples as needed.

Purpose	Examples
Draw on experience	How have you used these tools?
Give opinion	What has your experience been in trying this _____ ?
Predict outcomes and consequences	What would happen if we _____ ? What could happen if we don't _____ ? What if all new employees were required to _____ ?
Make comparisons	How is this the same as _____ ?
Find alternatives	Are there any alternatives to come up with the same result?
Challenge thinking	Do you agree with _____ and why or why not?
Place value, priority, importance	How do you feel about _____ ?
State relationships	Why are these two things connected?
Bring understanding	Why do you think the company is asking the people to _____ ?
Demonstrate understanding	Show me how you properly attach _____ ?
Explore motivation	What is the rationale behind the _____ policy?
Apply	Would you use this procedure at home?
Make evaluations	How has this machine improved?
Confirm	How do you know that is working?

Using Closed-Ended Questions

Tip Sheet 4

Closed-ended questions focus on factual information. There is often a right or wrong, yes or no answer. They require short responses. Use the following examples as needed.

Purpose	Examples
Recalling information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you summarize main points? • Who is the procedure written for? • Do you wear this in your daily work? • What hazards are there on this job site?
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some possible outcomes of this disease? • Where does this happen at your workstation? • What are the right conditions for this to happen? • When would you use this safety device?
Classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where or what group does this chemical belong to?
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the proper way to wear this PPE? • What is the proper procedure for hazard identification?
Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has happened when proper ergonomics are not followed? • What are the hazards with not keeping your eye on the weather?

Dealing with Disruptions

Tip Sheet 5

Here is a list of common disruptive behaviours you might experience with an audience, and tips for dealing with the behaviours. Refer to them as needed.

Distraction	Definition	Strategy
Disinterest	The person seems bored, yawning loudly, looking at their watch. You should deal with disinterest or it may affect other audience members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move closer. Standing close to the person will focus their attention. • Ask the person a question that engages and brings him or her into the safety talk.
Sarcasm	The audience member makes sarcastic jokes. You need to deal with sarcasm or your audience will lose respect for you.	Confront the individual directly. This person has an issue that needs to be addressed. Ask, "What do you mean by that?" Encourage him or her to state the concerns so that you can deal with them before moving on.
Arguing	The individual confronts you in front of the group, disputing your points. You need to deal with argumentative approach otherwise the group may join in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appear relaxed. If you appear angry or unsure of yourself, the audience will lose trust in you. • Calmly respond to the individual's comment. If the individual wishes to continue the discussion, invite them to discuss it with you in private after the talk.
Dominating	The person speaks a lot during your safety talk, frequently offering their comments and opinions. Dominators speak so much that no one else is able to contribute to your presentation. This annoys the rest of the audience and could cause them to stop paying attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask closed questions to the dominator. This satisfies their need to contribute but forces them to give a short answer. • Ask questions to other audience members. This encourages them to contribute and takes the focus away from the dominator. • Politely ask "Can we hear what others think about this?" • Explain that, while you appreciate their contribution, you would like them to allow others to speak. Be respectful.
Side conversations	Audience members engage in a private conversation while you are making your presentation. This creates a distraction for the others in the audience and encourages more side conversations.	<p>For related side conversations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may be translating or getting clarification; use the opportunity to raise the question to the group in case others also need translation or clarification. <p>For unrelated side conversations, do one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand closer. They will likely stop. • Pause. Continue once they have stopped talking. • Ask if they have a question or comment for the group. • Respectfully ask them to stop, and explain that their behaviour is a distraction to the others.
Cell phones	People take cell phone calls during the safety talk.	Don't compromise on this. Ask people to turn off their cell phones. Getting safety right must take priority. Business or personal matters can wait until after the meeting.
Latecomers	The persons have a habit of arriving late for safety meetings.	Bring the latecomer up to the front, and build them into the safety talk by having him or her demonstrate the safety point, or tell a related safety story.

Bridging Communication Gaps

Tip Sheet 6

Use plain English

Use simple word choices and whenever possible avoid idioms, slang, occupational jargon, expletives, colloquialisms, and complex humour like sarcasm.

Speak slowly, not loudly

Pause briefly between your thought groups in each sentence, like news anchors do on TV. It is easier for listeners to process what you say.

Use marker words

Separate your ideas with words like ‘first’, ‘then’, ‘next’, ‘after that’, ‘at the end’ etc. It becomes easier to connect your ideas.

Repeat key words

Be aware of your key words and ideas so that you can repeat them. This reinforces the listener’s understanding.

Be linear

Begin with the end. What do I want the person to know or do at the end of the conversation? Organize your thoughts before you speak so that you are clear, specific, and to the point.

Use gestures and visuals

Gestures can support basic ideas. Drawings and other visuals can explain more complex details. Write it down if necessary.

Listen actively

Pay attention. Show that you are listening. Allow the person to finish. Provide feedback. If pronunciation challenges make it difficult to understand, try mentally repeating the person’s words as they speak. Confirm what you did understand. Then ask the person to repeat slowly what you didn’t understand.

Use a translator as a last option

Take the time to use English at work. Only use a translator when absolutely necessary. It is worthwhile to make it a habit of putting English first. Unless customers or safety issues are involved, the daily patience of using English, and not giving up, will be worthwhile in the future.

Encourage others

Create a culture of encouragement on teams so that people are not worried about “losing face” if their English is incorrect. Encourage co-workers when their communication improves or when you see them trying to use English. Give constructive feedback to help them grow. Encouragement builds confidence in newcomers.

Bridging Cultural Gaps

Tip Sheet 7

Ask open-ended questions

“Losing face”, due to not understanding, may worry some newcomers. Therefore, avoid using yes and no answer-questions. For example, instead of saying “Do you understand?” ask “What are you going to do first?” or “What are the three things we need to get done?”

Adapt to different communication styles

Culture can influence communication, such as the degree of directness, or the amount of emotion and personal disclosure etc. Sometimes this good for a team, and at other times it can stop people from working well together. Training may be necessary to develop better communication skills on teams.

Look for indirect communication

Because people may not want to offend or “lose face”, they may communicate indirectly. You might need to “read between the lines”, or understand the hidden meanings in body language such as smiles, sighs, or even laughs. Ask. Be curious.

Be aware of personal space

Culture, religion and gender can significantly influence norms of personal space and touch. Ask newcomers about their understandings of space, touch. Ask them about their previous workplace cultures. For the most part, newcomers are eager to talk about their cultures and previous workplaces.

Recognize different internal clocks

Culture wires the “internal clocks” of people differently. This might affect communication, deadlines and punctuality, multi-tasking etc. Even religious practices and community commitments can set the rhythms of work. Ask newcomers about their ideas of time in the workplace. Compare your Canadian company norms with their cultural backgrounds to raise everyone’s awareness of differences. Get to know newcomers so that you can talk about issues. Stay curious.

Understand how hierarchy affects behaviour

People from more hierarchical work cultures might act differently with supervisors. For example, they may not show lots of initiative – always waiting to be told what to do. In a leadership role, they might seem “bossy”. Compare and contrast the leader-subordinate relationship in their culture with your own workplace. Discuss how trust, credibility, rapport and respect are built in your workplace.

Notice how credibility is built

Credibility affects trust and respect. It might be built through work accomplishments or personal character, by education, leadership positions and important responsibilities, family and influential people, money and possessions, age etc. How is credibility built on your team? Brainstorm with your team. Start a discussion at lunch.

Notice how rapport is developed

Become more aware of how people build relationship at work, of how much personal information they share and the things they talk about. Bring newcomers into conversations. Explain sports and other popular culture. Be curious about other cultures. Chat. Ask. Find out. Share what you learn with others on your team.

Build trust, not silence

Get to know newcomers. Help them find that “fit” at work. Look for the right timing to talk and offer advice. You have lived here from the beginning – you have “lessons learned” to offer them. They, in turn, can expand your worldview more than a TV show ever could. Do as they say at National Geographic, “Live curious.”

Building Cultural Intelligence

Tip Sheet 8

Stay curious

At National Geographic they say “Live curious.” Cultural curiosity can go beyond noticing different physical traits, forms of dress, food or rituals.

You can ask people about books, sports, music and raising kids. You can ask about growing up in another part of the world. Best memories. The role of parents and grandparents.

You can get into even more interesting discussions about relations on teams and with supervisors, what can and should not be talked about, how time is best used at work. How respect is shown in another language. How credibility and rapport are built at work. The conversation starters are endless.

When you make deposits of respectful curiosity into others, you build up trust, the most powerful resource on a team. Stay curious.

Suspend judgment

Have you ever had a cultural experience that was uncomfortable? You are not the first person. But you might be the first on your team to suspend judgment.

Suspending judgement means taking hold of your feelings, or emotions. Don't judge the situation as right or wrong, or even unimportant. It is like getting a rude email and waiting until the next day when you can think calmly about the right response.

In a difficult cultural moment, try to think about what the person's motivations might be. It is probably not meant to be rude or difficult. What you find is that human motivations are similar, but the way they come out can be very different.

A gentle response and a curious approach will get better reactions. Suspending judgement works.

Become mindful

Cultural intelligence means seeing both differences and similarities between people. What you should avoid is minimizing those differences, or over-emphasizing similarities.

Minimizing simply puts your own cultural norms onto others, because you think everyone is the same. Cultural norms are not universal. Even neighbours like the US and Canada differ in workplace cultures. In fact, culture hides itself best from its own followers.

Be mindful. Deepen your understanding of your own cultural norms. Go beyond the surface of things like dress, foods and sports to how you communicate, build credibility or make friends. Become mindful.

Be adaptive

Follow the golden rule: “do to other cultures as they would prefer.” This implies increasing your general and specific knowledge of the other cultures you work with. Even if it is a simple thing like adapting your eye contact or personal space, or a little more complex like adjusting your communication style. Why? Good relations. Less conflict. Better use of your time. Increased safety. Job quality. Respect and trust.

At the same time, if you recognize specific workplace norms need to be clearly shared with newcomers, don't keep silent. Draw on the trust you build with them and be open about differences.

Work to have a clear and common agreement on what behaviours and attitudes work best between you and your co-workers. Be adaptive too.

Creating Understanding with non-native speakers of English

Tip Sheet 9

What to do when a newcomer doesn't understand you

If a newcomer doesn't understand your spoken message, use the following guidelines:

- Front load your message – put the most important point first by focusing only on what you want the person to do or know.
- Make sure you are using plain language, and avoid slang, colloquialisms and idiomatic phrases.
- Speak slower not louder. Pause between ideas. Use marker words.
- Ask the person what they did understand, and then what they didn't understand.
- Re-explain the difficult part, keep it simple but don't lose the key meaning of your message.
- Write the most important points down in sequence.
- Use gestures and visuals if necessary.
- Use a translator, if nothing else works.
- Always confirm the person's understanding with open-ended questions, such as "What should we do first?"

How to check a newcomer has understood you clearly

If you know a newcomer usually finds it difficult to understand you, use the following guidelines:

- Before you start, invite the person to ask questions at any time they don't understand.
- Tell the person you are going to stop sometimes and ask him or her to repeat back or to answer a question. Tell the person that you would like him or her to ask questions at those moments as well.
- If in doubt, always check the person has understood by asking open-ended questions. Avoid "yes" and "no" answer questions. Instead, ask the person to explain what they are going to do, or get him or her to show you.
- Later, ask follow-up questions on details, such as safety related concerns, to check their understanding and progress.
- Watch for body language and indirect signals, such as smiles and laughs or head movements, that suggest the person is not understanding.
- Think of what you have not mentioned that you assume the newcomer knows.
- Write it down, or support yourself with gestures and visuals, or use a translator if nothing else works.
- Ask the person to give you an update at a specific time soon afterwards to avoid going too far in their work with a mistake.



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