

# TAKE 5 Tailgate-Toolbox Safety Meetings

A 5-Minute Safety Training Aid

HS04-003C (06-23)



A “tailgate” or “toolbox” talk is a short meeting or presentation held at work to discuss a specific topic related to health and safety. The meetings are used to alert employees of specific hazards to help prevent workplace accidents, illnesses, and related injuries.



## Why have meetings?

Tailgate or toolbox safety meetings can be used to address problems on the job or in the shop. The supervisor leading the meeting can draw on the experience of employees and use that experience to remind everyone of the dangers of working with particular kinds of machinery, tools, equipment, and materials.



## What to say?

At the meetings, supervisors and employees talk about work practices, machinery, tools, equipment, materials, attitudes, or anything that may cause or contribute to a work-related injury or illness. Keep the topic relevant. For example, if you have punch presses, talk about guarding. If you are building an apartment complex, talk about fall protection. You can also choose a safety topic you think needs to be reviewed. If you notice that spills are not being cleaned up promptly or if there has been an accident or a near-accident on the job, talk about it. Other points that might be addressed at the meetings include what happened, where it happened, and how to prevent it from happening again.

Encourage employees to suggest topics for the meeting. Employees often know best what and where the dangers are.



## What makes a good meeting?

- Hold the meeting on the job site, if possible, in a location where everyone can sit and relax.
- Conduct the meeting at the beginning of the shift, after lunch, or after a break.
- Choose the topic carefully. Ideally, topics should be about health and safety problems related to the job. Research the problem before the meeting. Plenty of easy-to-read information is available on almost every industrial hazard. Manufacturers' operations manuals, material safety data sheets, and your company's insurance carrier are all good sources of safety-related information. The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC)

can also supply you with a wide range of online publications on workplace safety and health topics [here](#).

- Limit the scope of the topic. For example, it is difficult to cover “Hand Tool Safety” in a 15-minute meeting. Instead, choose a more specific topic such as “Defective Hand Tools.”
- Encourage as much employee participation as possible yet stay within your allotted time to keep the meeting short.



## Sample topics

### 1. Why are guards not put back on machines?

Guards are placed on machines to prevent employees from coming into contact with moving parts. Many people are killed or injured every year because guards are removed and not replaced.

Ask the group to give reasons for not replacing machine guards. Some common responses may include:

- ✓ I didn't have time to replace the guard.
- ✓ I wanted to make sure the machine was working okay and never got around to replacing the guard.
- ✓ I put on a new drive and the old guard did not fit.
- ✓ I had to remove the guard to adjust the machine.
- ✓ I could not work with the guard on, because it slowed me down too much.
- ✓ I have used these machines for years without guards and I've never been hurt.

All of the previous comments are excuses. After an accident happens and someone gets killed or injured, guards are replaced and strict rules are enforced to make sure the machine never operates again without the guard. However, then it is too late for the victim.

The purpose of a meeting on this topic is to make sure rules are always followed to keep accidents from happening.

### 2. Defective Hand Tools

- ✓ Show examples of hand tools found on the job with defects such as mushroomed heads, split or loose handles, dull or broken teeth, or sprung jaws. Ask the employees to point out the defects.
- ✓ Ask how many employees in the meeting have had an accident or know of an accident caused by defective tools.
- ✓ With employee input, agree on a method for reporting, removing from use, and repairing or replacing defective hand tools.



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**1-800-252-7031, Option 2**

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