

## **Alcohol & The Job**

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings. Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it. Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

### **BEGINNING THE MEETING**

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide. The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting. At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Working under the influence of alcohol is strictly prohibited. This means more than just not drinking on the job. Tests have shown that alcohol can still have an effect on your body up to 18 hours after you have stopped drinking. Alcohol use is a legitimate on-the-job safety issue - and not just an attempt to control off-the-clock lifestyles.

Alcohol is a sedative. Drinking any quantity of alcohol impairs a person's judgment, thinking ability, and coordination to some degree. Some people can 'handle' alcohol better than others, but it is a fact that any alcohol consumed has some effect. Other factors which influence your body's ability to metabolize alcohol include your weight, medications, and previous medical conditions. You may not feel it right away, but remember, alcohol affects judgment.

After drinking, you are no longer in a position to assess your own capabilities. You don't have to be drunk to have some impairment. If you can't make it through the day without a drink, you could have a problem and should seek professional help.

What should you do about a co-worker who is drinking on the job? Should you ignore the situation or report it? Most people would ignore the situation because they do not want to cause problems on the job or do not want to get involved. People would prefer to avoid conflict at almost any cost. But look at it this way the drinker, no matter how nice a co-worker, is not doing you any favors. It's a fact that the drinker is less productive. Who has to pick up the slack? You do. It is a fact that the drinker is more likely to be involved in accidents. Who else is he or she placing at risk? You!

Are you allowing the drinking to continue?

1. You are if you cover for the drinker's poor productivity.
2. You are if you cover their mistakes.
3. You are if you make excuses to others for them.
4. Take control of the situation.
5. Don't allow the situation to continue. Stop covering for the drinker.

Talk to your supervisor. It is your responsibility to talk to your supervisor whenever any performance or safety issues affects your job. A drinking worker could be just as dangerous as a defective saw. You wouldn't hesitate to bring the saw to your supervisor's attention, would you?

If you are uncomfortable, suggest to your supervisor that there may be a problem. A good supervisor will take the initiative and pick up the issue from there.

Whatever you do, make sure you do something. Watch out for your co-worker as they may need help. If you don't, you may pay dearly for someone else's mistake.

## **GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW**

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

## **ENDING THE MEETING**

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

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Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

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Comments:

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