



Toolbox Talks

New Co-Workers & Employee Responsibilities Part 1

Give New Co-Workers Your Support!

Once the initial orientation to the company is over & the basic requirements of the job & safety program have been covered, it's time to move the new employee into the work force & get acquainted with the people he or she will be working with. **Co-workers play an important role in getting the new person off to a good start.**

What is a veteran employee's role when it comes to orienting a new employee? **Remember that new people are nervous to begin with-just starting a new job.**

They probably don't remember all the instructions they are given & aren't familiar with the new surroundings. This is often a time for information overload.

So how can an experienced hand help out?

- Introduce yourself to this person, explain your job, & offer assistance.
- Encourage the new hire to ask questions if he or she is not quite sure. Remember how hard it was to admit you didn't know everything when you started a new job?
- Remember too, that the new person may be highly skilled & experienced in his or her trade, but not necessarily used to your company's ways of doing things.
- Point out locations of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, restrooms, & break rooms.
- Be sure your new co-worker is wearing the right PPE & is using it properly.
- Volunteer to serve as a mentor to the new employee, to assure that safe work procedures are understood & followed.
- If you spot this person doing something wrong, tactfully explain the proper procedures. It's easier to do this if a "coaching" role has been assigned or agreed-upon.
- During lunch & breaks include him/her in the group, so everyone can get better acquainted.
- Resist any temptation to complain about aspects of your job that you don't like-get the new person started out on a positive note by passing on what's good about the company.
- Perhaps most importantly, lead by example with correct work habits.

Getting a new employee started off on the right foot is very important.

Statistics indicate that up to 60% of all job injuries occur to new employees with less than six months experience on the job. Repeated, friendly reminders of safety procedures & work rules by a mentor can greatly reduce the chance of an accident with the new employee. Many times new employees will not think of questions until after they have worked a few days & begin to understand the job requirements more thoroughly. As a co-worker, if you make yourself available to answer questions, it shows your willingness to provide a safe workplace for everyone involved. Remember, getting new people started on the right path can help prevent an accident or injury to everyone on the crew. **Don't think that helping to develop a productive co-worker is a burden, think of it as an investment in the future of your work group & your company.** Besides, it's the way you'd like to be treated yourself!

New Employees: What Are The Odds For Injury?

How many companies have you worked for in your career? How many different projects have you worked on? How many times have you changed occupations: from an oiler to an operator; from a laborer to a carpenter; or from an ironworker to a welder, then to a lead man?

Every time you have made one of these changes, you've faced a higher probability of being injured on the job. **Studies show that in heavy industries, up to 25% of injuries, or 1 in every 4 workers, will be injured within the first 30 days of starting work.** That's because new-hires are not just green, inexperienced workers, they are also people who are new to their occupation, their job, or a specific work environment.

In your profession, you've learned the 'tricks-of-the-trade' that allow you to work safely & efficiently. How did you learn your trade & the methods that make you a valuable asset to this company? You probably had some formal training, as well as lots of on-the-job-training.

On-the-job-training means you learned your job from practice & from those already experienced in the trade. **Now, as you work beside new-hires, it is your experience that must be passed on. Remember, it doesn't matter whether this person is a 25-year veteran in the business who is simply new to this company, or if they are a green trainee who just bought their first set of tools, all of these people are playing the odds.**

So, keep a helpful eye on the new-hires in your crew. Take the time to describe the layout of the project, the best method to access the work, or how to work a tool they have never used. Everyone wants to learn the best way to do a job. Someone probably showed you how to do things, so take the time to help out your partner. When you show your co-worker the safest & smartest way to do a job, it helps keep you safe as well.

Over 90% of all injuries are caused by an unsafe act--someone doing things the wrong way. How many of these injuries do you think happened because the worker just didn't know the safest or smartest way to get it done or didn't want to ask for fear of being ridiculed?

You will be playing the odds a lot throughout your career. Reduce your chances of becoming an accident statistic by asking questions if you're new to the job. Help someone else avoid being a statistic by teaching them the tricks-of-the-trade you've learned from experience. **It's a two-way street.** Whenever you begin a new job, you are the rookie who is playing the odds. Work safely, ask questions, & go home every night without an injury. Beat the odds!

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New Co-Workers & Employee Responsibilities Part 2

General Safety: Employee Responsibilities

An effective Accident Prevention Program should include the defined responsibilities for management, supervisors, & employees. Management, by law, has responsibility for the safety & health of all employees as well as providing a safe workplace. Supervisors have responsibility for providing a safe work place as well as managing the production issues. Now we need to address employee responsibilities & what those entail.

Employers & supervisors should expect the employees to be responsible. This starts with getting to work on time, working safely through the day, & addressing concerns to their supervisor.

Employees are responsible to:

- Listen & learn from any training. Be an active participant in learning a job skill or safety issue.
- Ask for assistance if the training or instruction is not clear, or you don't feel comfortable in performing the task correctly & safely.
- Report unsafe acts & near misses immediately, especially if the unsafe act is on going. This will help keep the workplace safe for everyone.
- Address problems with the supervisor ASAP, BUT always try to give solutions to every problem. (You may understand more than the supervisor about the problem & how to fix it.)
- Re-address issues with the supervisor on un-resolved topics discussed in the past. (The supervisor may have forgotten about those topics.)
- Be an active member in the safety of the workplace. Participate in Safety Meetings when trained on a safety issues.

These are just a few areas employees should be responsible for. The list is endless. Try to develop other areas to assist in safety & production. Bring these areas to the supervisor's attention & expect an answer. This input should be appreciated.

The name of this game is clear, open communication between management, supervisors, & employees. The lack of communication is one of the largest problems faced today in any workplace. Don't let this happen to you & your company. Be responsible to see that it doesn't.

Shop Safety Checklist:

(Keep this checklist in mind, not only in our shop, but in any work environment; & remember, lead by example.)

The following are common, important safety guidelines to remember when working in the shop environment:

- Under no circumstances should unapproved people be allowed to use the shop equipment. Do not allow unauthorized persons to visit or loiter in the shop.
- Secure the shop when no one is present. It goes without saying that you should never leave a machine in operation while it is unattended.
- Check emergency equipment, such as first aid kits, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, & eye wash stations monthly.
- Periodically check all hand tools, portable power tools, & larger shop equipment. This is usually a good time to submit purchase requisitions for replacements cords, guards, & other worn or damaged equipment, such as a scratched face shield that users can hardly see through.
- Check to make sure all cleaning baths & parts washers are safe to use. Take this opportunity to check area lighting, ventilation, fusible links on the self-closing covers.

Good safety practices start with good housekeeping. Use the following guidelines for your shop maintenance:

- Clean up spills immediately.
- Keep walkways & stairs free of tripping hazards.
- Store oily rags in a covered metal container & be sure to empty it every night.
- Periodically remove excess cutting oils & filings from shop machinery.
- Keep all tools in their place, & red-tag tools that need repair.
- Never wear jewelry or loose clothing around rotating machinery. Be cautious of any item that may become entangled, including long hair.
- Remember to follow all the proper steps when utilizing a lockout/tagout procedure. Never cut corners because you think it's going to save time.
- If you have any doubts or questions about the operation of a particular piece of shop machinery, never hesitate to ask your supervisor or a qualified co-worker.