



# Weekly Safety Meetings Select Edition

Safety Training for the Construction Industry

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San Diego Services

JAN WEEK 1

## A Safe State of Mind

What is a safe state of mind? Can you get one? Do you even want one? Let's start with the first question. You've heard someone say "He's in a good state of mind." That usually means that he has a positive attitude, he's happy, he sees the glass as being half-full. When you have a safe state of mind, you are always aware of hazards around you, you anticipate problems, you naturally wear your PPE because you'd feel naked without it. When you have a safe state of mind, safety is your first thought and your first action, not just sometimes, but every time. Remember that it's not enough just to think about the safe way or remember the safety rules, you must put those thoughts into action.

Can you get a safe state of mind? Yes, but it takes time and effort. First you have to learn. If you are going to avoid hazards, you have to know what they are. Then you have to train yourself to think about safety—all the time. Make an effort to look for hazards and best practices everywhere you go. Eventually you'll start thinking about safety automatically.

Do you even want a safe state of mind? **YES!** If we're all in a safe state of mind, there will be fewer accidents and we'll save lives, time, and money. Those savings are good for all of us. In addition, your state of mind can rub off on

others, including your kids. If they grow up with a safe state of mind, they'll be healthier and will suffer fewer injuries and broken bones. Make the effort to develop a safe state of mind for yourself, for your co-workers, and for your family.

Construction is a very dangerous business. As an industry we need to do a much better job of preventing accidents. Accidents don't just happen, they have causes. If you're in a safe state of mind you're more likely to notice the cause before the accident happens. You can take action to eliminate the cause. No cause... no accident, no accident...no injuries! We can reduce accident rates in construction if every worker develops a safe state of mind.

When you're in a safe state of mind, safety comes naturally, you barely even have to think about it. What better time than the start of a new year to set a goal for safety: always be in a safe state of mind. It will keep you safe, healthy, and alive.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**The best workers are safe workers.**

**Start the new year out right...**

**think safety—act safely.**

**NOTES:**

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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JAN WEEK 2

## Save Attitudes Save Lives

Some days you're on a roll. Everything goes your way, from early morning traffic without delays, right through to the late-evening sports reports on the news. Other days it's just the opposite; you seem to be on the losing end of the stick. No matter what comes your way, it's your attitude that will determine how you deal with each event. When it comes to safety, everything depends on your safety attitude.

Concentrate on each task you perform. Don't be distracted by nearby conversations or other activities. Organize your work; take a few extra minutes to plan the task to reduce the chances of injury.

If we set an example by working safely, others will be influenced by what they see and hear. Attitudes change and grow, and like anything that grows, they grow stronger in a favorable environment. Apprentices, helpers, and journeymen are influenced by the behaviors of leadmen, foremen, supervisors, and management.

Your attitude toward safety affects how you approach hazards and how you deal with everyday situations. Your best protection against accidents and injuries is a positive safety attitude. A negative attitude about safety can only cause accidents. It makes perfect sense: a bad safety attitude leads to unsafe acts that can lead to accidents. If you have a negative safety attitude, you need to improve it because it presents a threat to your well-being and that of your co-workers.

Safety needs to be part of the plan and part of the discussion. Everyone needs to know about near misses, accidents, and their causes so that they can be eliminated. You can lead by example. Your safe attitude shows in your work habits. Make sure that you pass on that attitude and those habits to others. Remember that everyone in your workplace and at home is affected by your attitude toward safety.

### **Bad Attitude → Unsafe Acts → Accidents & Injuries**

Attitude affects behavior. As you change your safety attitude, you should avoid unsafe acts and replace them with safe work practices. Some of the unsafe acts you must avoid include: being in a hurry, taking chances, disregarding OSHA standards, and taking shortcuts. Maintaining a good safety attitude is a habit you **can acquire**.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**Ignorance is no excuse.**

**If you don't know how to perform a task safely, ask your supervisor.**

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JAN WEEK 3

## Horseplay

Horseplay has no place on a construction site. What may be intended as a harmless prank, can lead to an accident that results in damage, injuries, or death. Construction workers face too many hazards on the job every day; we don't need one more. Practical jokers make accidents more likely and add unnecessary danger and cost to the workplace.

Consider some examples of horseplay and the possible consequences for the victim of the prank:

**Sneaking up on someone in order to scare him:** If the victim is operating a dangerous tool, he could be startled and might cut off his finger, lose an eye, or drill through his hand. The startled victim could also lose his balance and fall off a ladder or scaffold.

**Spraying someone with compressed air:** This can potentially cause serious eye, ear, and skin injuries. Compressed air can rupture an eardrum and make someone deaf.

**Throwing any object—especially a heavy or sharp object—to a co-worker:** Back injury can result when the victim tries to catch the heavy object. A sharp object can easily pierce the skin or become lodged in the victim.

**Booby-trapping or altering a tool, bench, work area, or piece of equipment:** The victim could receive a deadly shock from electrical equipment or be disabled from injuries caused by a falling object.

**Damaging a co-worker's personal protective equipment:** The unknowing victim will think he is protected when he really isn't.

**Pushing or tripping:** Your co-worker could stumble or fall causing pain, broken bones, or a concussion.

What can you do to help stop horseplay? Never encourage, initiate, or participate in horseplay. Most jokers are usually just looking for attention from an audience. Don't provide it. Let your co-worker know that you will not let his disruptive behavior continue. Remind the practical joker that he could lose his job and be criminally prosecuted if he causes an injury or death.

Some states will prosecute a joker because the injury resulted from a deliberate act rather than an accident. Report horseplay to your supervisor.

Horseplay and practical jokes usually involve the humiliation of a victim. The victim might respond with verbal confrontations, physical assaults, or a desire for retaliation that can lead to arrests, further injuries, and legal action.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**In just a fraction of a second, horseplay can turn from playful to fatal.**

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JAN WEEK 4

## Practical Jokes, Games, and Contests

When safety is your priority, you show respect for your health, your job, your co-workers, your family, and your way of life. When you disregard safety by engaging in horseplay, you're placing more importance on pranks, games, and contests than on your values. Horseplay can lead to disabling injuries and even death. In spite of the relationships you may have established with your co-workers outside the workplace, once you step onto the jobsite, you must be responsible, professional, and you must work safely.

Practical jokes are intended to be funny and something to laugh at. But when you're already surrounded by hazards in the workplace, there's no room for practical jokes. Someone might think it's really funny to sneak up behind a co-worker and give him a really good scare. But no one will be laughing when the person jumps when he's startled, and either the hazardous chemical he was using splashes on the joker's face or the knife he was using slices across two of his fingers. Is a practical joke really worth getting stitches, being hospitalized, losing your eyesight, your job, or someone's life? Absolutely not!

Games also have no place on any jobsite. With today's many portable gaming devices, it's easy to carry a handful of games in your pocket. You might also have games on your cell phone. But you should never play games when you're on the job. For one thing, you are getting paid to work, not to play. But, more importantly, you might be distracted for just

long enough to cause an accident or a serious injury. When you're on a construction site, you have to watch where you're walking, look out for signals, listen for backup alarms, remember to lift safely, and avoid tripping and falling hazards. That sounds like a lot to keep track of, and it is! Construction work is dangerous, and staying safe requires your undivided attention. This is not a game. When you lose, you really die—there is no reset button.

Contests should be left for reality shows and cook-offs. You don't need to compete with your co-workers to see who is the strongest or the fastest. Unless you're on a reality show, you shouldn't pick up an oxygen cylinder and press it over your head. No one should carry a hundred-pound bag of cement on their shoulder to impress fellow workers. These unsafe acts can lead to injuries. A strained muscle or pinched nerve may take you out of the workforce. Consider yourself a winner if you go home to your family at the end of the day, uninjured.

Don't instigate, and don't participate even when "it's just for fun" and "nobody's going to get hurt." There is no place for jokes, games, or contests in construction.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**Anyone who participates in horseplay or encourages it has no business on this construction site.**

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JAN WEEK 6

## Partners In Safety: Your Co-Workers And You

When you stop to watch all the activity on a construction site, you see workers engaged in lots of different tasks. Some are moving materials and supplies; others operate cranes and swing loads overhead; still others are hammering, digging, wiring, or supervising and directing work. Because all these activities take place in a relatively small area, one person's actions can affect the safety of many other people.

In many ways, your co-worker's safety is linked to your safety. What your co-worker is doing while working above, can affect you if you're below. If a co-worker puts a damaged or defective tool back in the gang box one day, it affects you the next day. And whatever hazardous chemicals you're handling (or mishandling) can have an effect on those working in the surrounding area.

Even though we're all working on different tasks, everyone has the same goal: completing the job and doing it safely. Keep in mind that every day in the U.S., 1300 construction workers go home injured or ill, and 3 don't go home at all. Safety in the construction industry is **everyone's responsibility**, and it's important that we look out for each other to reduce the number of accidents, near misses, injuries and fatalities on the job.

In addition to considering your own safety before you begin any task, get into the habit of thinking about the safety of those working around you. For instance, if you're grinding a piece of metal, you know you need to wear eye and face

protection. But what about others who aren't protected from stray sparks? You wouldn't want a co-worker to turn the corner and get sprayed in the face with flying sparks. Consider repositioning your work or posting visible signs to avoid accidents and injuries.

Similarly, if you're a carpenter using a nail gun or powder-actuated tool, make sure you think about those who might be standing on the other side of the wall. It's possible that as you fire the tool, the fastener could strike a co-worker in the eye or cause a fatal puncture wound. Consider how your work might create dangers for others nearby and then take steps to reduce or eliminate those hazards.

Talk to your co-workers about hazard recognition. The person working next to you might point out a hazard that you have overlooked. Don't be offended—be thankful that someone is looking out for you.

Immediately report to your supervisor any co-worker who is reckless or who is endangering the safety of others. Everyone wants to go home safe at the end of the day.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**If you're wearing PPE to do your job safely, those around you may need to wear the same PPE. Alert bystanders before they are exposed to any dangers.**

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