Weekly Safety Meetings Select Edition
Safety Training for the Construction Industry

San Diego Services

Pre-Task Plans

SEPTEMBER WEEK 1

Construction projects go smoother when everyone is working together. Knowledge is a powerful tool and must be utilized to its fullest potential. Therefore it is recommended that all work activities or tasks be planned. Today's safety meeting addresses the use of pre-task plans.

"Plan the work and work the plan" is an old saying in the construction world. You would think that planning would be common sense, but there are many jobs where this critical step gets skipped. The benefits of using a pre-task plan are enormous. First it gives you an opportunity to plan the work activity. Next, you are able to identify any safety hazards and discuss appropriate corrective measures. You can focus on personal protective equipment and make sure that you have the right safety gear available.

An effective pre-task plan will address the task, tools, equipment, weather, PPE, safety requirements, special conditions, and emergency requirements. All of these items will be addressed with the crewmembers prior to starting. Everyone will be given an opportunity to make suggestions and ask questions. Do you have these questions answered in your pre-task plan?

- ☐ What will you do differently if it is raining, snowing, or there is ice on the ground?
- ☐ Do you have the right tools for the job?
- ☐ Have they been inspected and are they in good condition?
- ☐ Are there sufficient quantities of tools, PPE, and first aid supplies?
- ☐ Do you have fuel and is it stored properly?
- ☐ What are the evacuation routes?
- ☐ Are two-way radios, call boxes, or cell phones available?

You should ask and answer those same questions when you start a new task or start working in a new area. When the conditions or tasks change, the plan may need to change. Take time to discuss the changes and then implement them. Plan the work and work the plan.

SAFETY REMINDER

A good plan worked by good tradesmen will produce good results.

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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REVIEWED MSDS # SUBJECT:

MEETING DOCUMENTATION:

JOB NAME:

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Pre-Task Plans & Hazard Evaluations

SEPTEMBER WEEK 2

Weekly Safety Meetings are excellent tools for improving safety on any jobsite. There is an even greater impact if the information presented in those safety meetings is implemented *daily*. To minimize the risk of accidents, planning for any construction project should take place on three levels: a hazard evaluation for the entire project, daily planning to coordinate contractors and equipment, and pre-task planning to reduce the likelihood that you or someone else is injured.

The project hazard evaluation phase occurs before the project begins. The supervisors, project engineers, safety director, and project manager get together to discuss how they are going to complete the work without any incidents. Many contractors find this to be very effective in reducing accidents, minimizing delays, and containing costs.

One good way to address safety issues on a *daily* basis is to hold a meeting at the start of every shift to go over the day's activities. During this meeting the supervisor and crew members review the tasks ahead and address safety concerns. They discuss what special tools, equipment, and personal protective equipment will be needed to accomplish the work. If everyone understands what is going to be done and how some types of work will affect others in the area, adjustments can be made to allow all the tasks to be completed safely.

The third level of safety planning is the pre-task plan. This is your job. Too often you start something new or just pick up where you left off, without thinking through the task. Think about what you are going to be doing. Here are some sample questions to ask yourself: What are the safety issues that could affect you and those working around you? Are you wearing the right personal protective equipment? Has anyone left materials, tools, or scrap lying around? Do you need to lock out or tag out any equipment? Did you check for hidden hazards like electric and gas lines in walls, floors, or underground? Have you read the MSDSs for any chemicals you'll be using? Will you need any entry or hot-work permits; how about a spotter or someone on fire watch?

Planning safety into the project from the start can save lives, time and money. A little time spent anticipating potential dangers at each level—project, day, and task—can prevent most injuries and accidents.

SAFETY REMINDER

Identify hazards at every stage of the game so the dangers can be controlled.

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Accident Investigation

SEPTEMBER WEEK 3

You don't plan on having an accident, and you certainly don't want to be the one under the microscope should one occur. An accident is defined as an unplanned or unexpected event. It may include people, equipment, vehicles, property, or the environment. Occasionally there are good accidents, but the ones we're talking about here did or could have caused injuries and property damage. Accidents are usually followed by investigations. The reason that we investigate accidents is to find out why they happened so that we can prevent them from happening again in the future.

Accident investigation is a process during which we try to capture facts and details about the accident. Good investigators look at what led up to the incident, what happened during the incident, and how to prevent the incident from happening again. One method of investigating accidents is root cause analysis. This method defines the problem thoroughly by finding out who was involved, exactly what happened, when the accident occurred, when contributing events occurred, and where people and equipment were located. Evidence, like pictures, test results, and witness statements, is collected to support these answers. The situation, contributing factors, and results are then tied together by cause and effect to create a complete picture of the accident. The investigator's final task is to propose solutions and changes that will prevent a reoccurrence.

As a skilled construction worker, one of your primary responsibilities is to avoid and prevent accidents, but we all know that they still happen. You need to think about your role in the accident and how you can help with the investigation. The accident scene can provide a great deal of helpful information. After the injured have been taken care of and the scene is safe, it should be secured. Don't move anything unless you are instructed to do so by your supervisor or the accident investigator. It's a good idea to take a few notes and make a quick sketch of the scene or what was happening just before the accident. These steps are especially important if you are in charge on the site. If you witnessed the accident, you may be asked to provide a statement. Respond professionally not emotionally. Relax and explain what you saw and did. Remember, accident investigators are trying to gather information, not place blame. If you don't remember anything tell them so. Stick to the facts and avoid hearsay.

SAFETY REMINDER

Asking questions about who, what, when, where and why isn't just for accident investigations.

The answers can also help you improve your work.

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SEPTEMBER WEEK 4

What Do You Learn from an Accident Investigation?

The focus of your safety training is to help you develop safe work practices so you can avoid accidents. Unfortunately, accidents still happen. Accidents have negative outcomes such as injuries, deaths, damage to equipment and property, as well as loss of productivity. However, the positive outcomes of any accident begin with the accident investigation. The investigation is conducted to find out what caused the accident, how to prevent accidents like it, and often results in changes to safety programs and procedures.

The goal of every accident investigation is to prevent the same type of accident from ever happening again. The goal **is not** to assign blame or point fingers at anyone. As a construction worker, someday you may be on a job where you will witness an accident; maybe you already have. You may have a chance to participate in the accident investigation. The investigator will want to interview you as soon as possible after the accident. Tell the investigator as much detail as you can remember. Keep in mind that the point is not to get anyone in trouble, but to prevent future accidents. **Be honest and be specific.**

Another by-product of accidents is that they raise our level of safety awareness. If you are lucky enough to be involved in an accident investigation and not be the victim, ask yourself: How could this accident have been avoided? Could this have happened to me? Would I have been doing the same thing that my co-worker was doing when the accident occurred? What steps would I have taken to avoid the accident? What behaviors would I change?

Of all factors, your work practices and habits have the most significant influence on your chances of having an accident. Examine your own daily work practices and ask yourself: What bad habits can I eliminate? Do I always follow safe work practices? Do I take shortcuts and skip steps that could prevent accidents? Do my work habits set a good example for others on the job? Do I participate and pay attention during safety training?

Don't wait for an accident to occur to make the site safer. You can prevent accidents by making accident prevention a part of your daily routine. Report unsafe conditions to your supervisor, avoid horseplay, follow safety guidelines, make suggestions, practice good housekeeping, wear the necessary personal protective equipment, and ask questions before you begin any task you are unsure of. And when there is an accident, participate in the investigation—treat it as an opportunity, not an irritation.

SAFETY REMINDER

Near misses are excellent opportunities to prevent future accidents.

Report near misses to your supervisor.

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