

Overexertion and Overextension

A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

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.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

DURING 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.

Overexertion and Overextension

Overexertion is an overextension of our physical capabilities-going a little beyond what our bodies are able to accomplish without dangerous results.

Let's first talk about overexertion, which covers many things. Perhaps the prime offender is working at a physically exhausting job for too long, in which case severe fatigue sets in. Not only can this be harmful but the reduced awareness under such a condition can cause us to have accidents more readily. Also, working too long in temperature extremes can, of course, lead to colds, frostbite, heat exhaustion or heat stroke, depending upon whether the temperature is too hot or too cold.

Another form of overexertion can occur when attempting to lift or move heavy or awkward loads. Back injuries hernias, sprains and strains can cause serious trouble.

We must point out very clearly that the term "overexertion" is relative. What would not be overexertion for a worker in good condition might be too much for someone who is out of condition.

Now let's talk about overextension, which primarily deals with motion or balance.

How many times have we heard of a person trying to reach far to the side while working from a ladder, which results in a serious fall?

Attempting to jump from one level to another, or across an opening or a ditch, is overextension. Running down stairs or taking two steps at a time is asking for an injury.

Reaching too far out from platforms or scaffolds or from members of a structure being erected is dangerous overextension.

Remember, overextension of what your body can safely do, from a health and well-being point of view, is overexertion.

In general, overextension involves trying to go beyond your own personal physical limits.

Be smart--don't expose yourself to either of these injuries.