

# How To Hold A Tailgate Talk

Tailgate (or Toolbox) talks are short informational meetings held with employees to discuss a worksite related safety topic. The term tailgate meetings comes from the practice of meeting around the tailgate of a pickup truck on site. The goal of Tailgate talks is to inform employees of specific hazards associated to a task and the safe way to do a job. Tailgate talks also serve as a reminder to employees of what they already know while establishing the supervisor's credibility and conscientiousness about his or her responsibilities for safety.

Here are some tips for running a successful tailgate talk:

- Keep them brief. 10 to 15 minutes is an ideal amount of time for a tailgate talk.
- Keep them specific. Tailgate meetings must address specific hazards, or safe workplace practices that relate to the job and/or work the employees are actually performing.
- The meetings should draw on the experience of employees and utilize that experience to remind them of the dangers of particular construction processes, tools, equipment, and materials.
- Always give workers an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the toolbox talk. Don't make snide remarks to employees who do ask a question, as this will discourage others from asking questions later.
- The meetings should be informal and periodic on an as-needed basis.
- Keep a short record of what topic was discussed, when, and which employees were present so you can avoid repetition and maximize the impact of the talks.
- Practice what you preach. Nothing makes a trainer lose credibility faster than to have a worker see them doing something that violates the safety precautions that were covered in a previous toolbox talk. Always set a good example.
- Remember to always just KISS (Keep it Simple for Safety)



## **Resources and References:**

For a list of sample tailgate talks provided by NYSDOT visit [www.dot.ny.gov/main/business-center/contractors/construction-division/safety-health-information/tailgate-safety-talks](http://www.dot.ny.gov/main/business-center/contractors/construction-division/safety-health-information/tailgate-safety-talks)

A list of subjects and customizable tailgate talk sheets from the CLRP “Everyday Safety” series can be found at

OSHA Toolbox Talks URL  
<http://www.oshatraining.com/Toolbox-Talks.php>

A sample sign in sheet is available on page 3 of this document.

