

Toolbox Talk Template with Attendance Record

SOP · US · Updated 2026-07-13 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A toolbox talk is a short, focused safety discussion — typically ten minutes, held at the start of a shift, on one topic relevant to the work that day — with a signed attendance record proving who was there. It is also called a tailgate meeting or safety huddle; whatever the name, it is the cheapest ongoing safety training a crew can get.

The talk itself is only half the document. The other half is the attendance record: names, signatures, date, topic, and presenter. When an inspector, insurer, or attorney asks whether workers were trained on a hazard, the stack of signed talk records is often the answer — a safety program you can hold in your hand.

This template gives you both: the structure of a talk that fits in ten minutes and actually lands, and the attendance record section to print on the back of every talk sheet.

Purpose and scope

This procedure sets out how [Your company] plans, delivers, and records toolbox talks at [site/location]. It applies to all supervisors and crew leads who deliver talks and to all workers who attend them.

Talks are held [frequency — e.g. weekly, or daily on active job sites] at [time and place], last about ten minutes, and cover one topic each. Every talk produces a signed attendance record.

Roles and responsibilities

- Safety lead ([name/role]): sets the talk schedule and topic calendar, reviews completed records, and owns this procedure.
- Presenters (supervisors and crew leads): prepare the talk, deliver it, run the attendance record, and hand the signed sheet to [name/role] the same day.
- Workers: attend, sign the record, and raise hazards and near misses during the talk — the discussion is where the crew's knowledge surfaces.
- [Name/role]: files the records at [system/location] and flags anyone who missed a talk for a catch-up before their next shift on the affected task.

Choosing the topic

- This week's work: the highest-risk task on the schedule — that is the talk the crew needs today.
- Recent events: any incident, near miss, or inspection finding at [Your company] or on a nearby site — nothing gets attention like "this happened here".
- Seasonal hazards: heat illness in summer, cold stress and icy surfaces in winter, storm and wind work.
- Recurring fundamentals on rotation: ladders, housekeeping, PPE, lifting, lockout/tagout, chemical handling — the topics that cause injuries precisely because they feel routine.

- Keep the year's topic calendar at [location] and mark off what was actually delivered — the gap between planned and delivered is the first thing to audit.

Structure of a 10-minute talk

1. Open with why (1 minute): name the topic and tie it to today's work — "we are pouring on the second floor today, so this is about guardrails and openings."
2. Tell the story (2 minutes): a real incident or near miss involving this hazard — ours if we have one, an industry example if not. Concrete beats abstract.
3. Cover the hazard (3 minutes): where it shows up on this site, what it does to people, and the [2–4] specific controls that apply here — not a recitation of the whole standard.
4. Show, don't just tell (2 minutes): demonstrate with the actual equipment where possible — the harness, the guard, the label, the lockout device.
5. Ask the crew (2 minutes): "where have you seen this go wrong?" and "what makes this hard to do right on this site?" — then write down what they say and act on it.
6. Close with the one thing: a single sentence the crew should carry into the shift — then run the attendance record before anyone walks away.

Attendance record

Every talk sheet includes this record, completed at the talk — not reconstructed later. It is the proof of training; treat it with the same care as a timesheet.

- Header: date, time, site/location, topic, presenter name and signature.
- One row per attendee: printed name, signature, and [employee ID / trade / employer, on multi-employer sites].
- Notes section: questions raised, hazards reported, and any follow-up actions with an owner and date.
- Absentee line: who was scheduled but not present, and the date their catch-up was delivered.
- Signatures are collected at the talk, in ink or in [app/system] — a name written in by the presenter is not a signature.

Delivery tips

- Hold the talk where the work happens, standing, at shift start — a conference room at 3 p.m. is a different, worse meeting.
- One topic per talk. Two topics means neither is remembered.
- Speak plainly and translate where needed — a talk the crew did not understand is not training, whatever the signatures say.
- Never read a sheet aloud verbatim; know the three points you need to land and talk to the crew, not the paper.
- Follow up visibly on what the crew raises — the fastest way to kill toolbox talks is to ignore the answers you asked for.

Records and review

Signed talk sheets are filed at [system/location] and retained for [period]. [Name/role] reviews them [frequency] for coverage (did every crew get every scheduled talk?), attendance gaps, and unresolved follow-up actions.

This procedure and the topic calendar are reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually], after any recordable incident, and when the work or the season changes. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Build a topic calendar for the next [quarter] from your actual schedule of work, your incident history, and the season — then let recent events override it freely.
2. Print the talk outline on one side of the sheet and the attendance record on the other, so the record cannot get separated from the talk.
3. Brief your presenters on the 10-minute structure and have them practice one talk on you before they run one on a crew.
4. Collect signatures at the talk itself and file sheets the same day — reconstructed records are obvious and worthless.
5. Audit monthly: pick two filed sheets and ask two attendees what the talk covered. If they cannot say, fix the delivery, not the paperwork.

Official guidance

- › [OSHA — Training resources](#)
- › [OSHA — Recommended practices for safety and health programs](#)
- › [OSHA — Construction industry](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/osha-toolbox-talk-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.