



SITE SAFETY MEETING - TOOL BOX TALK

Respiratory Protection on the Job

Safety on the job is all about avoiding hazards and preventing injury or illness. Some hazards are easily identified and avoidable but some are not; such as working around chemicals and hazardous materials.

There is a variety of personal protective equipment (PPE) available to lessen the risk of exposure or injury to the outside of your body such as hard hats, gloves, safety glasses and shoes. But it is equally important to provide protection for your internal organs; especially your lungs.

Inhaling vapors is one of the easiest ways chemicals can enter your body. These include materials like paint, lacquers, sealants, cleaners, etc. When working with chemicals or working in an area where chemicals are being used always wear the proper respiratory protection.

Airborne materials such as sawdust, insulation, grout compounds, dust, etc. is common on construction sites and when inhaled can introduce foreign matter into the body. Don't take chances and when in doubt protect yourself and use the necessary PPE. Exposure to vapors and dust could cause sickness, long term illness or even death.

Dust Masks commonly used on the job are made of filter paper. This form of protection can protect you from some airborne contaminants such as dust and mist particles but are not designed to give you absolute protection. These masks do not form a tight seal between the mask and your face but may still help you from not breathing irritating materials like drywall and insulation dust. Dust masks are made for one time use and when it becomes difficult to breathe replace it with a new mask. Never use another person's mask and make sure there is an adequate supply of masks on hand before you start work.

Air Purifying Respirators protect against the more serious respiratory hazards. The filter used in this mask is made of different materials and is designed to stop you from breathing hazardous substances. These have three basic parts: the head gear, a face piece and the filter unit. Be sure you are using the correct filter for the job and ask your supervisor for help if you have questions.

When using any respirator you should be clean shaven for a tight fit. The respirator when not in use should be cleaned, dried and then stored in a sealed plastic bag such as a zip-lock bag with your name on it.

Confined Space When working in confined areas, closed buildings or poorly ventilated areas it is important to provide adequate air circulation. Dust masks or Air Purifying Respirators will not improve the volume or the quality of breathable air in a confined work area!! Special breathing equipment is required when working in confined or poorly ventilated areas. Also, by law specific safety precautions must be followed when working in these conditions. When in doubt do not enter the space and contact your supervisor immediately.

Respiratory protection is very important when it comes to your health. If you are not sure whether you should use a dust mask or an air purifying respirator, look at the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and the label on the product which will indicate the PPE required for safely using the product. A doctor must approve your wearing of a respirator so if you expect that your work will call for the use of a respirator, make arrangements to consult your doctor in advance of the need.

When you work with hazardous materials always read the instructions on the label and MSDS sheets, understand the warnings and follow the recommended protective measures before using the product.

It is important that you protect yourself from exposure to hazardous substances on the job and this *Tool Box Talk* only touches on a few of the possible exposures and precautions. Refer to OSHA regulations for more information on the safeguards and equipment needed when working with hazardous materials.

Questions to start discussion

1. What PPE can you use to protect yourself from breathing dust?
2. When should you use an air purifying respirator?
3. Who should you consult before using a respirator?
4. What are the three basic parts of an air purifying respirator?
5. How should you care for and store an air respirator?
6. What should you do when you suspect that there is not adequate breathable air in a poorly ventilated, confined, or closed work area?
7. What are some respiratory hazards that can be identified on the job today?

Base Material Source: National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) (5-3-06)

Meeting Notes:

Employee Comments / Concerns: _____

Other Safety issues to be addressed on the job:

Training Record: Date: _____ Jobsite: _____ By: _____ Title: _____

Employee Name	Emp #	Signature	Employee Name	Emp #	Signature
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Tool Box Talks are employee safety meetings designed to serve as 15 minute on-site training sessions focused on key topics relative to your work. Site superintendents or foremen are responsible for holding meetings each week usually during a morning break. This important segment of your general safety program encourages open discussion on the topic of the week and allows employees to share their experiences about accidents and safe or unsafe work practices. Recordkeeping is mandatory and all involved must sign off on each session.

Topics for your company could include: electrical safety, excavation and trenching safety, fall protection, scaffold safety, stairway and ladder safety, hazard communication, fire safety, personal protective equipment, tool safety, materials handling, etc.

Sample Tool Box Talks are provided compliments of the Safety Committee of **the Hartford County Homebuilders Association** in cooperation with the credited source of this Tool Box Talk.

Tool Box Safety Talks can be purchased from the National Association of Homebuilders 1-800 368-5242, www.nahb.com or may be available through your business insurance provider. For more information on Tool Box Talks contact the HBA office 860 563-4212.

BUILD SAFELY – THINK SAFETY