

What is Social Distancing?

Wikipedia defines Social Distancing as: a set of nonpharmaceutical infection control actions intended to stop or slow down the spread of a contagious disease.

You can help protect yourself by changing your daily routines in order to minimize close contact with others. Self-isolating in your home is the best control for avoiding exposure to a contagious disease. As this is not always possible, following the guidelines listed below can help to minimize your risks.

Practice social distancing by:

- Ensure you stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from one another
- Avoid personal contact such as touching or shaking hands
- Avoid large groups, keep gatherings at a minimal (50 people max). If needed, break it up into smaller groups for job planning, toolbox talks or safety meetings.

To help reduce your risk of infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the crease of your elbow or a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Dispose of tissue immediately and wash or sanitize your hands
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.

Protect Yourself On Site by:

- Know the practices/procedures your employer has put in place to access the jobsite safely.
- Discuss strategies to ensure social distancing and proper hand hygiene at toolbox talks and in orientations
- Ensure that hand washing stations and alcohol base hand sanitizers are on site and available for all

workers. Supply all company and personal vehicles with hand sanitizer.

- Put up posters of proper hand washing techniques.
- Ensure all offices and non-porous tools are sanitized and cleaned regularly.
- Perform environmental routine cleanings.
- Disinfect PPE daily after use by washing thoroughly with antibacterial soap.
- Post informative posters telling people what to do if they get sick.
- If you suspect you have contracted a virus, stay home and self-isolate until health has improved, if needed contact your family doctor or go to the nearest hospital for severe/life threatening symptoms. For Pandemic Viruses contact 811 for further instructions on testing and treatment.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act in your jurisdiction entitles all workers to three rights:

- The right to know about health and safety matters.
- The right to participate in decisions that could affect their health and safety.
- The right to refuse work that could affect their health and safety and that of others.

General duties of employers

302(1) An employer shall, at a place of employment:

(a) monitor the use or presence of, or a worker's exposure to, any chemical substance or any biological substance that may be hazardous or harmful to the health or safety of a worker;

(b) where reasonably practicable, substitute a less hazardous or harmful chemical substance or biological substance for a hazardous or harmful chemical substance or biological substance;

(c) subject to subsection 307(1), to the extent that is reasonably practicable, reduce any contamination of the place of employment by a chemical substance or biological substance; and

(d) develop and implement work procedures and processes that are as safe as is reasonably practicable for the handling, use, storage, production and disposal of chemical substances and biological substances.

Tool Box Talk

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.