

ASK AN RSA

With Travis Robertson, Lower Mainland

In this monthly feature, we invite readers to submit a question for a BCCSA Regional Safety Advisor (RSA) to address. This month's RSA is Travis Robertson, who serves the Lower Mainland.

Question:
How often should I conduct toolbox talks?

Answer:
The Workers Compensation Act and the OHS Regulation do not use the term "toolbox talk" or set a strict schedule. However, the Act requires employers to provide their workers with regular information, instruction, training, and supervision necessary to ensure workers understand hazards, safe work practices and safe job procedures, and to protect others in the workplace.

Toolbox talks (also known as safety briefings or tailgate meetings) meet the obligations for reinforcing safe work practices, hazard awareness, and two-way communication between supervisors and workers. Their purpose is to keep safety top-of-mind, ensure workers know what hazards to anticipate, and provide a forum for workers to ask questions, raise concerns, and provide feedback.

Toolbox talks are most effective when they are regular, relevant, and consistent with the level of risk and complexity of the work being performed. Many employers in high-hazard industries conduct them daily or weekly, often at the start of a shift or workday or before work begins.

Toolbox talks should be brief, informative and engaging and focused on specific topics, such as observed hazards and tasks relevant to that day, safe work procedures and practices, recent incidents, and equipment/process changes.

What Employers Should Do

- Establish an ongoing program of toolbox talks that provides regular safety information, instruction, and hazard communication in line with the Workers Compensation Act and OHS Regulation.

- Ensure toolbox talks are conducted at appropriate intervals based on work activities, risk levels, and workplace conditions.
- Use toolbox talks to support training requirements by communicating known or reasonably foreseeable hazards and reinforcing safe work practices and safe job procedures, and controls.
- Maintain records of each toolbox talk, including the topic, date, attendees, key discussion points, and any action items or issues raised.

What Workers Should Do

- Attend all toolbox talks and engage in discussions about hazards and safe work practices.
- Ask questions and raise concerns if tools, tasks, or conditions are unsafe or unclear.
- Apply the information shared in toolbox talks to their work and follow relevant procedures.

Regulatory References & Additional Resources:

- **Workers Compensation Act, Part 2, Division 4, Section 21**– Employer duties to provide necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision for worker health and safety while also ensuring **workers are made aware of all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards** they may be exposed to through their work.
- **WorkSafeBC Toolbox Talk Templates & Safety Resources** – WorkSafeBC provides a range of free toolbox talk topics and templates to help employers document sessions.
- Toolbox Talks: BCCSA.
- Hazard ID and Risk Assessment Guide: BCCSA - BCCSA's new Hazard Identification Web App is a mobile-friendly tool that helps BC construction workers identify workplace hazards, find control measures, and access relevant WorkSafeBC regulations by trade, task, or hazard type.
- Resource Catalogue: BCCSA – BCCSA's OHS resource catalogue.

Have a question? Need help?
Your Regional Safety Advisor is available at no cost.

Contact us at: rsa@bccsa.ca or Regional Safety Advisors, BC Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA).