



Insurance | Risk Management | Employee Benefits

Participating in Safety Meetings

According to OSHA, one of the most effective ways to promote a safe working environment is to get involved in company safety meetings. These informal, brief meetings allow employees like you to stay up to date on potential workplace hazards and related mitigation measures, often addressing topics such as ergonomics, tool handling, equipment use and safety-minded attitudes—basically anything that may contribute to accidents and associated injuries or illnesses on the job. Regardless of industry or experience, these meetings can make all the difference in helping you better protect yourself and others at work.

Safety Meeting Basics

When participating in workplace safety meetings, there are several best practices to keep in mind:

- **Make time.** Be aware that attending safety meetings is mandatory. Take note of the meeting schedule and plan accordingly.
- **Leverage any available meeting documentation.** This may include filling out the meeting sign-in log, reviewing provided safety flyers or written policies, and taking additional notes as needed.
- **Be an active participant.** Some of the best safety tips come from workers just like you, because you often know best where and what the biggest dangers are. As such, if you have something to suggest or add, don't hesitate to speak up.
- **Pay attention.** Even if the meeting topic is one you are more familiar with, don't tune out. You may still end up learning something new or having valuable insights to share.
- **Ask questions.** Remember that there are no dumb or silly questions when it comes to safety. If there is any workplace safety protocol or policy you are unsure about during a meeting, it's always best to ask for clarification. Chances are that your question will benefit others as well.
- **Voice your concerns and praise.** In addition to reviewing the meeting topic at hand and contributing your thoughts, you can also take this time to share any ongoing safety hazards or issues you may have noticed on the job. Furthermore, you should voice your praise for any co-workers who have demonstrated a continued commitment to fostering a safe work environment. In some cases, you may even be able to nominate them for certain awards or prizes.
- **Offer your ideas.** If you have an idea for a future safety meeting topic, others will likely find it of interest too. Be sure to share the details with your supervisor or designated workplace safety committee.

For More Information

Whether you are a new employee or a tenured staff member, maintaining a strong safety culture and upholding effective policies and procedures is everyone's responsibility. By participating in safety meetings, you can do your part to protect the workplace and reduce the risk of potential accidents. Consult your supervisor for additional workplace safety guidance.

Handling Workplace Violence

April is Workplace Violence Awareness Month. Violence in the workplace remains a serious safety and health issue across industry lines. According to the National Safety Council, thousands of U.S. workers experience instances of workplace violence each year.

Whether they come from a current or former employee, an unknown assailant, or as a result of domestic violence or personal problems, many incidents of workplace violence can be foreseen and averted.

As an employee, it's important to understand the different types of workplace violence, potential risk factors and prevention strategies.

Types of Workplace Violence

OSHA defines workplace violence as any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at a worksite. Workplace violence can include threats, verbal abuse, physical assaults and homicide. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health notes there are four types of workplace violence:

- **Type I** involves an individual with criminal intent who has no legitimate relationship to the business or its employees. The individual typically commits a crime (e.g., shoplifting or trespassing) in conjunction with the violence.
- **Type II** involves an individual (e.g., a client) who has a relationship with the business and engages in workplace violence at the business while or after receiving their services.
- **Type III** involves worker-on-worker violence and includes instances when an employee attacks or threatens another employee.
- **Type IV** involves an individual who has a personal relationship with a business's employee but does not have a relationship with the business itself.

Risk Factors

There are several activities that might increase your risk of experiencing workplace violence, including the following:

- Having frequent contact with the public
- Exchanging money
- Delivering passengers, goods or services
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working late evening or early morning shifts
- Working in high-crime areas
- Guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in community-based settings

Prevention Strategies

All threats should be taken seriously. You can reduce your risk of experiencing violence in the workplace with the following safety strategies:

- Stay alert and aware of your surroundings at all times. Be prepared to recognize violent or otherwise threatening behavior from co-workers and third parties (e.g., customers or suppliers).
- Work in pairs when traveling to unfamiliar locations on the job or when you find yourself in unusual situations.
- Learn how to identify, avoid or diffuse potentially violent situations by reviewing related company policies and procedures.
- Attend any workplace safety training sessions regarding proper conflict resolution techniques and handling dangerous scenarios. This may involve remaining calm, complying with the assailant's demands to avoid escalation, refraining from engaging in physical altercations at all costs, and informing a supervisor or the authorities (if necessary) as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Report any suspicious behavior or violent incidents immediately in writing.

Reach out to your supervisor if you have any further questions about workplace violence prevention.

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