



Weekly Safety Meetings **Select Edition**

Safety Training for the Construction Industry

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San Diego Services

FEBRUARY WEEK 1

Cell Phones

Cell phone use increases by the millions each year. People of all ages use them for business, pleasure, entertainment, and for emergencies. Many cell phones now offer features that let you take pictures, play games, watch videos, and even listen to music. Although cell phones often make our lives easier and more practical, they can become a serious safety concern.

When you're at work, consider that your employer or supervisor may have a cell phone policy that restricts where and when you can use cell phones. Be aware of your surroundings while you use cell phones. Concentrate on where you're going to avoid slips, trips, falls, and collisions due to inattention caused by cell phone conversations. If you don't think you can avoid being distracted by your phone at work, leave it in your car and check for messages during breaks.

Having a cell phone in your car while you drive may give you peace of mind—you can report accidents, unsafe drivers, and call for help in case of an emergency. But with this convenience also comes a large responsibility. If you are talking on a cell phone and operating a motor vehicle, your mind is not on your driving. You may think that you're driving as well as you always do, but studies show that cell phone users have slower reaction times and are mentally distracted even when their eyes are on the road.

Follow these safety tips anytime you drive with your cell phone in the car:

- Make driving your priority.

- Turn your phone off to keep from being distracted. You can always check your voicemail and return calls when you've reached your destination.
- Avoid unnecessary calls.
- If you must use your phone, pull over to make the call. Never dial your phone while driving.
- Familiarize yourself with your phone's features before you try to operate it while driving.
- Use your phone's speed dialing or one-touch dialing features so you don't have to look away from the road.
- To help you keep both hands on the wheel, use the hands-free mode.
- Don't attempt to take notes or look up phone numbers.

Due to the increase in cell-phone-related accidents on roadways, many states and municipalities have enacted legislation prohibiting the use of cell phones in vehicles. In some cases, you may be ticketed or fined. Sometimes it's best to hang up!

SAFETY REMINDER

There are enough dangers on the road to keep you busy while you drive. Don't put your life at risk for the sake of a phone call!

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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Stress Management

Stress is part of our everyday life. Mild forms of stress can act as motivators and energizers. However, if your stress level is high and prolonged, it can cause physical and emotional problems such as heart disease, back pain, gastro-intestinal problems, anxiety, and depression. It is important to learn how to cope with stress in a positive way; otherwise, it can affect your performance and relationships at work and at home.

situation. Finally, focus on the positive side of situations. Channel your energy into solving the problem rather than just worrying about it.

There are several coping strategies you can adopt to reduce the effects of stress in your life. Learn to manage your time wisely. Set realistic goals for yourself. Avoid committing to unattainable deadlines. Recognize and accept your limits. Eat a balanced diet. Drink alcohol in moderation. Keep caffeine consumption to a minimum. Exercise regularly. Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and meditation. Develop some mutually supportive friendships. Avoid unnecessary competition. Remember that relaxation is a vital part of life. Don't feel guilty about enjoying a hobby, a nap, a hot shower, or a pick-up game at the gym as a source of relaxation. Remember to be understanding and supportive when family members and co-workers are under a lot of stress.

We usually think of stress as something caused by external events, but events in themselves are not stressful. Actually, it's the way we interpret and react to events that causes stress. Stress can occur not only from negative life experiences but also from positive ones. Major life changes that can cause stress include marriage, a new job, pregnancy, divorce, and the death of a loved one. Although everyone responds to stress differently, the most common stress symptoms include fatigue, upset stomach, tight neck muscles, irritability, mood swings, headaches, and changes in sleeping and eating patterns.

Different people will react to and handle stress differently. By recognizing and proactively managing stress in your life, you can prevent the emotional and physical problems it can cause.

The first step in stress management is to identify your stressors. These can include family problems, time pressures, financial difficulties, health concerns, relationships, competition, disappointments, and unexpected change. Second, recognize what you can change and learn to accept the fact that some situations are beyond your control. Worrying about problems truly beyond your control causes stress but doesn't change the problem or the

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Laughter can help reduce your stress level, but remember that horseplay and practical jokes are not acceptable in the workplace.

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FEBRUARY WEEK 3

Supervisor for the Day

Yesterday you were just a member of the crew, just one of the guys. Today, you are filling in as the supervisor. Is the crew treating you differently? Do you feel a heavy weight on your shoulders? It's no surprise! You've been entrusted with the responsibility of making sure that the job progresses smoothly and that no one gets injured or killed. You have the power to make decisions. Some of the guys may not like or agree with them, but you have to make them nonetheless. When you are the supervisor, even if it's only for a day or two, in a way you are your brother's keeper. Let's talk about some things you'll need to do and some issues you should consider:

- Know the limits of your authority before you start to supervise anyone.
- Make sure that you truly understand the safety rules that apply to the work your crew will be doing.
- Explain to your crew that they must work safely and follow all of the safety rules.
- Follow up on your instructions consistently and without bias or favor.
- Enforce safety rules with disciplinary action if necessary (if you have the authority).
- Demonstrate your commitment to working safely through your own habits and conduct.

- Anticipate the hazards which may arise and act before accidents occur.
- Consult others on the site who are knowledgeable about safety.
- Encourage your crew to look for and discuss hazards with you.
- Make sure that you follow up on those discussions promptly and appropriately.
- **If you cannot do the job safely then don't do the job!**

Failure to observe safety rules that you know about or failure to maintain equipment can be considered negligence. Remember that you are responsible. Even when there's only one other person working for you, if you're the supervisor, you're responsible. And if you think that the others really know what they're doing and you shouldn't interfere, how would you feel if one of them doesn't go home because you didn't enforce a safety rule? It's your watch. You are in charge. You are responsible for their safety. Make sure they go home healthy.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Lack of planning on your part just might constitute an emergency, and maybe an injury or death.

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FEBRUARY WEEK 4

First Aid

First aid is the initial treatment an injury receives. Depending on the severity of the injury, additional medical attention may be needed. Injuries requiring first aid happen frequently in construction. Bruises, skinned knuckles, sunburn, and foreign objects in the eyes are common throughout our industry. Cuts and scrapes are two of the most common kinds of injuries incurred while doing construction work. They may seem minor, but left untreated they can become infected.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The supervisor plays a pivotal role in educating the individual to avoid injuries, and thus how to avoid having to seek first aid treatment. He or she must regularly remind the workforce to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), to inspect the work area for potential hazards, and to report all injuries, no matter how minor, so they can be treated properly. When injuries do occur first aid is vital.

OSHA regulations require that there be a certified first-aid-er at the jobsite if the jobsite is not in close proximity to offsite medical treatment. It's a good idea to find out who this person is in case you need assistance for yourself or for a co-worker. Check with your supervisor to find out who the company first-aid-er is and where the first aid kits are located. It is necessary to have a clean, fully-stocked first aid kit. A good first aid kit contains the essential items to treat minor injuries: bandages, tape, sterile pads, and especially protective gloves and a one-way mask. If the first aid kit is low on

any of these items be sure to ask your supervisor to order more. If you have the opportunity to take a first aid class, do it. You never know when you will use that training on or off the job.

You should only provide first aid if you have been properly trained and certified. When treating minor cuts and scrapes, be sure to follow proper first aid techniques. Apply direct pressure with a clean cloth to stop the bleeding. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. Bandage the injured spot with a clean, non-sticking dressing. Remember to keep it clean and change the bandage when you get home. Bruises and bumps to the head need to be checked. A bruise can develop a blood clot and create additional problems. If the injury is severe, proper first aid techniques can reduce the complications caused by the injury, stabilize the victim and increase chances of survival until outside medical attention can be provided.

It is up to you to work safely, wear your PPE, and do your part to not get injured. But if you or a co-worker is injured, make sure the injury is treated properly.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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First aid classes are conducted by the American Red Cross. Take the time, and maybe a family member, and go get the training.

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