



Daily Toolbox Talk: Be Supported May 3, 2022

Support is mutual. When you support a coworker or friend, they are in turn more likely to support you. This mindset will give each of us the courage to speak up for safety. Our voices are one of the greatest ways to eliminate exposure, but it is not always easy to speak up when we see a potential risk or an unsafe action. Support is also shown within selfless acts for others, which have positive physical and mental effects. A simple gesture of care and concern for a crew member or loved one gives the support they may need whether they are suffering from anxiety, depression, or a tough personal situation. Supporting each other and our crews will keep us safe and informed at home and at work.

Support at Work

Having the courage to say something when you see something can prevent a serious incident or injury on the job. Therefore, we must cultivate an atmosphere that values a willingness to share concerns and ideas. Craft Voice in Safety (CVIS), Serious Injury & Fatality Prevention (SIF) discussions, and other craft communication programs allow workers to share their stories and support one another. Consider the following opportunities for us to identify and voice our concerns:

- When we don't have the proper PPE, tools, or equipment to complete work per the plan.
- When there is a change in our tasks, the foreman, or crew.
- When we realize a material delivery date change will impact our daily activities or the job.

Everyone, from management to crew members, must speak up for safety. Consider the following tips to support your crew members:

- Be intentional about listening to each other and consider viewpoints different from our own.
- Do not be deterred by how you think a coworker will react. You are only responsible for how you communicate your concern, not how they respond.
- Be appreciative when someone is courageous enough to speak up and share concerns with you. They have your safety and best interest at heart.

Support at Home

We may never understand what goes on in individuals' homes or what challenges they or their families face. What is certain is that those concerns and challenges do not get left at the gate when we get to work. As many of you have heard, the construction industry is the second-highest industry for death by suicide. Struggles with addiction, substance abuse, and mental well-being run high in our populations. A selfless act can go a long way, and you may never know how significant of an impact you might have on a person by simply taking a moment to ask if they're OK, letting them know you appreciate them or showing them a moment of compassion. Consider the following tips when reaching out to a friend or coworker:

- Find an appropriate time and place to talk with your friend or coworker.
- Ask them how they are doing and actively listen; let them know they are not alone.
- Discretely notify a supervisor if you are concerned for the person's well-being.

Discuss these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.



CONSTRUCTION SAFETY WEEK

1. Have you felt supported in safety by a crew leader or coworker recently? What was the outcome?
 - Brought a safety concern to a supervisor, and it was resolved without conflict.
 - A time when the daily tasks changed and the job was paused to communicate new tasks and safety policies.
2. How can we be receptive to a coworker when they bring up a potential risk or safety concern?
 - Be open-minded. The person has our crew's best interest in mind.
 - Actively listen. Do not first react. If needed, ask follow-up questions to ensure you understand the concern at hand.
3. Has anyone ever talked about mental well-being, depression, anxiety, bullying, harassment, intimidation, and the impact on a project? What impact did it have on you or the workforce?
 - [Encourage sharing and storytelling]

DID YOU KNOW? Construction workers sustain more traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) than employees at any other type of workplace in the US. TBIs represent one-quarter of all construction fatalities, and more than half of fatal work-related traumatic injuries were a result of falls.

Safety helmets dramatically reduce the frequency and severity of TBIs due to their retention systems and ability to protect against lateral impact and penetration.

If your company has already adopted the use of helmets, ask your crews, "Why are you glad to be wearing a safety helmet rather than a traditional hardhat?" If your company is still considering making the change, ask, "What, if anything, are your reservations about safety helmets?" and reach out for more information.

