



Safety Talks for Small Business

Information Pack



Top Tips

Safety Talks for Small Business

1. Why

- Reduce the likelihood of accidents in your workplace
- You must provide appropriate training and information to your employees in a language and manner that they can easily understand
- Improve safety standards and behaviours within your business
- Update employees on new procedures or responsibilities

2. Prepare

- Decide what you want to discuss with your employees
- Use available and relevant training materials e.g.
 - 'Top Tips' Information sheets in this pack
 - Your 'Safety Statement' e.g.
 - Use and discuss completed risk assessments
 - Emergency procedures
 - Accident reporting requirements
 - Use 'Learn More' section in BeSMART.ie
- Use appropriate props and a suitable location
- Know your subject
- Keep it short, to the point and normally no more than 15mins

3. Communicate

- Engage with your audience
- Consult with your employees and record feedback
- Review feedback and implement changes where required

4. Record / Review

- Record details of talk and attendance using the register contained in this pack
- File your records
- Review and monitor work practices





Safety Talks for Small Business Register

Company:

Instructor:

Date:

Topic(s) Discussed:

Attendees:

Name

Signature

Feedback / Comments for Follow Up

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Talk Tips

- Prepare for the talk
- Check your employees know and understand the controls and procedures
- Make the talk meaningful
- Engage and involve your employees



Manual Handling

- Manual handling can be a potential workplace hazard
- Repetitive back bending, pulling and lifting from overhead, or forward bending and twisting can result in back injury
- Understand the type of manual handling work activities that are carried out in your workplace
- Consult with as many people as possible, particularly those who currently conduct the work
- Describe in your own words how a work activity is carried out and highlight areas where there is a manual handling activity
- Decide if there are potential difficulties with the manual handling activity and write it down (e.g.: the load is very heavy to lift as it weighs 60kg)
- Make an informed decision based on the facts collected as to the best approach to avoid or reduce the manual handling tasks within the work activity
- Identify better ways of working with less manual handling. Examples include:
 - Introduction of a mechanical handling device to transfer stock
 - Reduce size of load
 - Introduction of housekeeping policies to ensure that work areas are tidy and have better access
 - Relocation of stock to reduce travel distance when handling stock or to avoid need for handling at a height
 - Develop instruction sheet on safe handling of stock
 - Appropriate training in the safe use of handling aids





Chemical Safety

- Make a list of all the chemicals you have in your workplace
- Identify chemical hazards from label and Safety Data Sheet
- Consider what each chemical is used for, who uses it and how
- Implement suitable control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk
 - Eliminate – stop using the hazardous chemical if possible
 - Substitution – replace the hazardous chemical with a less hazardous chemical
 - Put engineering and procedural controls in place to reduce exposure
 - Provide appropriate personal protective equipment
- Record your findings





Fire Safety

- Know the Fire Triangle
- Know what material can burn
- Know the ignition sources
- Know what to do in the event of a fire starting
- Know how to put the fire out
- Know your critical fire safety systems:
 - Fire detection systems
 - Fire warning systems
 - Fire fighting equipment
- Know your evacuation strategy:
 - Emergency plan
 - Emergency escape routes
 - Train employees
- Know your housekeeping rules:
 - Keep it clean
 - Maintenance of plant and equipment
 - Certification of equipment
 - Storage and use of flammables
- Know how to contact your local fire emergency services
- Consult with your neighbours and landlord
- Check and service your equipment regularly
- Hold a fire drill every 6 months





Display Screen Equipment

- Examine the layout of computer workstations
- Consult with the person working at the workstation
- Identify potential problems with the workstation.
Examples include:
 - Seating is not adjustable
 - Monitor set too high
 - Lighting is not adequate
- Make the necessary improvements to the workstation
- Staff should avail of eye and eye sight test
- Do not sit in the same position for long periods, change posture as often as possible
- Plan your work to alternate from work on a computer to other work such as phonecalls, meetings, etc.
- Laptop users need to consider what improvements to make when working
- Be aware of your posture





Safe Maintenance

- Maintenance employees must be trained and competent
- Get external maintenance employees to report to a designated person
- Tell external maintenance employees the hazards in your workplace associated with their work and agree the precautions to be taken
- Make maintenance employees aware of external gas, water and electricity cut off points
- Avoid work at height during maintenance or take precautions to prevent falls
- Machinery must be isolated from its power supply before maintenance work and pneumatic/hydraulic systems checked for stored energy
- Guards must only be removed as required and must be replaced immediately when maintenance is complete.
- Maintenance mode (slow speed or under “hold to run” control) must be used if the machine parts to be adjusted are to be moving
- Plan all lifts; use mechanical lifting aids to lift/move plant or equipment
- Asbestos types and locations must be identified by a competent person and the work planned if it may be disturbed during maintenance work





Slips & Trips

- Monitor spills and absorb them quickly
- Identify high risk areas, e.g. level changes, slippery floors
- Deal with high risk areas, e.g. replace/treat slippery floors
- Keep floors and access routes clear
- "Wet floor" signs do not remove danger
- Use barriers to keep people from wet (or hazardous) surfaces
- Dry clean floors where possible
- Check the soles of footwear
- Trial slip resistant footwear in your workplace





Workplace Transport Safety

- Control entry to your workplace
- Keep pedestrians and vehicles apart
- Eliminate vehicle reversing, where possible
- Provide clearly marked pedestrian walkways
- Mark and signpost vehicle only areas
- Ensure all work areas are well lit
- Keep traffic routes free of obstructions/mark permanent obstructions
- Provide impact protection for vulnerable parts of the workplace such as lamp posts and columns
- Provide and wear high visibility personal protective equipment
- Accompany visitors



**Visit www.hsa.ie for more information
or log onto www.besmart.ie**



Work at Height

- Avoid work at height wherever possible
- Work at height must be planned, supervised and safe
- Prepare a written risk assessment
- Use equipment that protects the largest number of people in preference to individual equipment
- Ladders are only for low risk work of short duration. Maintain 3 points of contact
- Work platforms must have top and intermediate handrails and toeboards
- Protect all edges and openings where a fall could occur
- Inspect the equipment used for work at height
- Train users of fall arrest equipment
- Have rescue and emergency plans in place





Electricity

- Have your electrical installation certified by a competent registered electrician
- Beware of overhead power lines and their ability to kill
- Visually inspect all electrical apparatus and cables, check for signs of wear and tear and overheating
- Make sure all plug-tops are fused and that these fuses are correctly rated for the equipment they're supplying
- Replace blown fuses with one of same rating, never a higher rating
- All socket circuits must be protected by a residual current device, which must be tested regularly
- Never use a generator without isolating your installation from the outside network
- All distribution boards and fuse boards must be kept free of rubbish and combustible material
- Have emergency and first aid plans in place
- Use a competent electrician for all, even trivial, work on the electrical installation

