

Maintaining Interest in Safety

Departmental meetings have many safety uses. Their purpose may be to discuss the company safety program so that employees will better understand what is going on. They may be held to provide information about accident causes and accident types. They may be purely inspirational, to create an awareness of hazards and a desire to prevent accidents.

In many company programs, departmental safety meetings are held monthly. The trend is toward meetings conducted by the foreman, who may receive assistance in planning as well as materials, such as visual aids, from the safety department.

The program for a departmental meeting may include the following:

1. Report of injuries in the department since the past meeting, report of a safety inspection in the department, and report of the department's standing in a contest. (The total time spent on reports must not be so great that this part of the meeting becomes tiresome.)
2. Discussion by the foreman of where observance of safe practices needs to be improved.
3. Talk, demonstration, or visual-aid presentation on an appropriate accident prevention subject. The speaker may be the foreman, a member of the department, the company safety director, an outside expert, or an executive of the company.

Departmental meetings give the foreman an opportunity to point out in a forceful manner the dangers of certain unsafe practices. By condemning those practices, he practically binds himself to set a good example for his men. In addition, most workers welcome an opportunity to "get off their chests" whatever safety ideas they have.

At the conclusion of departmental meetings, the foremen should be required to prepare written reports for presentation to the plant safety committees and review by the managers.

Small group meetings with men doing similar kinds of work can be held at or near the work place. The supervisor or foreman may discuss the causes of an accident of which the

men have personal knowledge or in which they have personal interest. The men should be encouraged to join in the discussion, and a conclusion should be reached as to how the accident might have been prevented.

The supervisor may present a problem that has developed because of new work or new equipment. Again the men should participate and offer their views.

At times the supervisor may present a film or chart talk on a subject related to the work of the group members. Other visual aids such as models or exhibits may be used. Safety devices or pieces of equipment or material may be shown and discussed.

"Production huddles" are instruction sessions about a specific job being done that includes safety. Such meetings are particularly useful with maintenance crews when an unusual job is about to start. The plans for doing the job safely and efficiently are gone over and a procedure is agreed upon. Public utility line crews use this type of meeting and call it a tail board conference. Before starting a job, the crew gathers around the truck and discusses the job, laying out the tools and materials they will need and agreeing upon the part each man is to do.

A particular advantage of small group meetings is that they provide excellent opportunities for presenting all types of information, including safety information, directly to employees and stimulate exchange of ideas that can benefit the accident prevention program. To be successful, the small safety meeting must include a tangible message, originality of presentation, opportunity for audience participation, and a conclusion that spurs action toward an attainable goal.

Planning programs

Making the safety meeting interesting is of the utmost importance. There should be no complaining or scolding. Talks should be definitely limited in time and they should start and end on time. The subject matter of a talk should be considered in advance to make sure that it is pertinent and does not repeat other talks recently presented.

Large occasional meetings need even more careful planning and timing than do small meetings. People who are to speak, including company executives, should review what they intend to say with the person planning