

18 of the best construction toolbox talk topics

Why should you discuss any of these 18 toolbox talk topics?

I hope you landed on this page because you are looking for toolbox talk topics - and not deciding whether or not to engage in toolbox talks in the first place.

These 18 toolbox talk topics can help you get your toolbox talk cadence started, with whatever frequency you and your teams feel comfortable with - be it weekly, fortnightly or monthly - or can give you some fresh and concrete ideas about toolbox talk topics you haven't yet explored.

Some of these topics are high level and 'obvious', while others are more surprising and hidden, but all of these topics are must-do construction toolbox talks for your projects and teams.

If you have any toolbox talk topic suggestions, please comment at the bottom of the page. I'd love to make the list 28 topics, or 29 or even 30 - but only the best make the cut.

Otherwise, read on and enjoy finding some toolbox talk topics and content for your next important safety talk.

18 of the best construction toolbox talk topics you can talk about.

Toolbox talk #1 - Face protection -

The face is a toolbox talk which must be covered. Somewhat incredibly, even though the face houses some of our most important and valuable assets, it often gets overlooked while the hands, feet and eyes get all of the attention. While eye protection can sometimes seem sufficient for activities which send sparks or other projectiles towards the face, it is important to bring attention to the fact that the entire face often needs protecting for a number of activities.

This toolbox talk topic should cover both the employees responsibilities when it comes to face protection - as well as the employers responsibility

in regards to PPE (personal protective equipment) and the minimum requirements for face protection.

Toolbox talk #2 - Protection from falling objects -

Hard hats are the common defense when it comes to protection from falling objects, and are also one of the most common and iconic symbols of construction workers.

But hard hats are not impenetrable, nor do they suffice when it comes to properly protecting people and teams against injuries and incidents caused by falling objects. All people have an innate worry or curiosity that something may fall on their head - and it happens all-too often on construction sites.

This topic should cover the types of protection which need to be employed on construction sites including guardrails, toeboards and canopies. It's always an interesting topic given that we can all relate to it very closely - and it's an important one too.

Toolbox talk #3 - Repetitive injuries and ergonomics -

Many of the dangers present on construction sites are obvious and blatant, while others sneak up on people. These dangers are some of the worst - including simple ergonomic issues and repetitive use issues.

On construction sites all over the world, men and women are put out of work, work in pain or disabled by musculoskeletal disorders which stem from repetitive issues and ergonomic issues. While some of these issues are a byproduct of the type of work being performed, many of them can be mitigated and reduced through information and environmental architecture.

This toolbox talk topic should cover how the repetitive tasks being performed can affect someone; what constant exposure to these activities can do to different parts of the body; and how to make the job fit the employee (and not the other way round) through smarter equipment choices, breaks, and work stations.

Focusing on how bad some of the lifelong issues are can make people alert to the 'reality' of their every day, as it's often an incremental issue which slowly fatigues and debilitates workers over time.

Toolbox talk #4 - Slip, trips and falls -

One of the most frequent incidents which occur on construction sites are slips, trips and falls. While less avoidable than some other safety issues (we are human after all), there are some concrete steps and processes which can be employed to reduce the risk of these frequent and potentially impactful injuries.

For this talk topic, it's worth noting that these 'minor' slips, trips and falls are the number one cause of injury on most construction sites and cause serious injury and death.

Point out the obvious 'steps' people can make to avoid this issue while also pointing to some more novel ideas as well.

Toolbox talk #5 - Lightning safety -

Lightning safety is a favourite toolbox talk topic, and one which catches the attention and imagination of most workers.

With this toolbox talk, you can entice the interest of listeners with some of the remarkable information and science behind lightning (google lightning facts) and some safety tips which are less commonly known than you would think:

- Avoid metal items like ladders, which also make you a tall and enticing conductor
- Don't wait for the rain. All thunderstorms - whether accompanied by rain or not - are dangerous



Toolbox talk #6 - Facts about fatalities -

A sobering toolbox talk topic, but one which should be talked about.

Every year, people die on construction sites - but sometimes these deaths and fatalities can just become 'numbers' to people.

Talking about the actual stories behind how people did die makes the issues very real for people, especially when it's related to the work they do every day.

It also showcases how deaths can occur anywhere at any time on a construction site - from collapses to simple falls.

Toolbox talk #7 - Safe driving -

An often overlooked aspect of site safety - both from machine operators and normal site workers alike is safe driving. Because almost everybody drives every day, it becomes normalised. But the conditions on construction sites are not the same as conditions on public roads (although roads are incredibly dangerous too).

Safe driving on site - and what should be covered in your toolbox talk are things like aim high steering, leaving yourself an out and making sure that people see you through eye contact.

You can usually have a little bit of fun with this toolbox topic and it can be quite a humorous one as many of the guys and gals on site are stubbornly in support of their driving skills.

Toolbox talk #8 - The deadly dozen -

One of the more popular and well-known construction safety and construction toolbox talk topics is the deadly dozen, which highlights twelve (12) unsafe acts AND 12 unsafe conditions in which construction workers need to recognise before they happen, as they happen and after they happen.

Toolbox talk #9 - Loud or repetitive noise and hearing damage -

Another topic which can never be explained enough is hearing loss and damage. Construction sites are inherently noisy places to be and work, and many of the workers on site be accustomed to these noises.

In your toolbox talk, you'll want to cover the tangible consequences stemming from hearing damage in construction as well as the reality of the noise and sound levels being experienced (it's often much louder than people think).

Toolbox talk #10 - Excavation and trenching -

Excavation and trenching, along with other heavy hitting activities like demolition are favourites on construction sites.

And while they are critical and instrumental activities, they also cause serious injuries and deaths all over the world.

There are the risks and hazards associated with heavy machinery like excavators, and the risks associated with the land and trenches which are associated with the trenches and changes in site associated with water, sewer, pipeline, power line construction and other utility service work and excavation.

Key takeaways to focus on in the toolbox talk include pot-holing safety and recording, protective systems to prevent cave-ins and utilising a

competent or authorised person to ensure trenches are secure and marked properly.



Toolbox talk #11 - Behavioural safety: Bad habits -

Bad habits creep into the every day lives of all of us - and we need to be constantly reminded of these bad habits in order to be conscious of them and improve them over time (although many people struggle to admin their bad habits or that they genuinely 'have a problem').

Some bad habits which people get into are unique to construction and construction sites, including certain activity complacencies while other bad habits simply roll over from normal pedestrian life onto the site - like cell phone usage and distraction.

While this topic is an important and serious one, you can get some great interaction and engagement on this toolbox talk topics with people calling other people out and self-auditing their own behaviour by holding up a mirror to their bad habits.

Toolbox talk #12 - Fatigue -

Fatigue is a very real issue in workplaces all over the world, and none more-so than on construction sites where the stakes are very high - both at an individual level and for other people as well.

Many construction jobs require hard physical labour while others require long days on site - both of which can cause serious fatigue.

Your toolbox talk should focus on first identifying fatigue - and breaking away from the stigma attached to be tired or needing to fix fatigue - as well as different types of fatigue and how to manage fatigue.

Toolbox talk #13 - Ladders (and working at heights) -

Falls from heights are the most common cause of injury on construction sites, which makes sense, as people are often forced to work at heights while managing tools and jobs which snag their attention.

Ladders are an important component of this ever-present danger, as they are so commonplace and simple issues and hazards like uneven ground or a slight misbalance can cause serious injury.

People think they understand ladder safety and working at heights well, but this toolbox talk topic should be focused on tangible rules and guidelines for better ladder safety and as well as ladder inspections and rung by rung safety.

Toolbox talk #14 - PPE (personal protective equipment) -

The PPE toolbox talk is one of the most common, as working with personal protective equipment is such a common need on site.

While everyone 'gets' the need for PPE, you can cover a number of details in this toolbox talk (Which will probably need to be broken down into a few shorter talks) including:

- Eye protection
- Foot protection
- Hard hats
- Harness safety
- Foot protection and safety shoes

Just like a few of the other toolbox topics on this page, the need to re-engage people about PPE is a constant one, so don't be afraid to pull out this topic again, and again.

Toolbox talk #15 - Fire prevention -

A toolbox talk topic classic and must-include is fire safety. Many companies and projects incorporate this toolbox talk into fire safety week but it's certainly relevant year-round.

You'll need to cover fire response in your toolbox talk while also diving into what people should know about electrical fire safety, smoking and smoke alarms.

Fire is a constant threat in construction sites, and there are many more detailed fire safety toolbox talk topics which are interesting, informative and important:

- Elements of combustion
- Handling flammable liquids

- Hot works and hot works permits



Toolbox talk #16 - Seasonal safety issues -

One of the more fun and contextual toolbox talk topics which you can cover centre on seasonal safety issues, from the type of weather and 'season' to specific issues which arise from holiday periods including Christmas and Halloween.

What you talk about in these toolbox talks will be highly dependent on where you live and the climate and holidays associated with that place - but some common themes are:

- Heatstroke and heat exhaustion
- Cold stress
- Dangers from ice
- Frostbite and hypothermia
- Fan safety
- Fireworks safety
- Winter driving safety

This is a good topic for getting some engagement from people talking about the seasons and their upcoming or previous plans or experiences.

Toolbox talk #17 - Lock out and tag out (LOTO) -

Electrical safety issues commonly arise on site from poor electrical safety management as well as the fact that electrical is one of the lesser known areas of site safety (there are less electricians).

This toolbox topic should be centred on the technicalities of lock out and tag outs so that people understand what to do and why it's being done - as well as how to interact with lock out and tag out tags.

Covering topics which people understand less about is important for upskilling people and ensuring that people are becoming more well-rounded safety professionals who understand and can interact safely with more areas and aspects of site.

Toolbox talk #18 - Hazard communications -

All of these other safety toolbox talks are in vein if people can't communicate hazards and incidents properly.

Repeat injuries and repeat mistakes are the mostly avoidable types of incidents which occur all of the time on construction sites - and we can all do a better job of mitigating this through effective communication.

This toolbox topic should focus on the physical and formal communications in place to report incidents and communicate hazards, as well as discuss the team and site culture around safety management.

Covering this toolbox talk topic is a step in the right direction around safety anyway, as it forces people to talk and think about safety and be open and transparent. Discussing safety communication and making

everyone feel safe and comfortable reporting issues is a key to safety participation and decreasing safety issues.

The important thing to remember about construction toolbox talk topics

These 18 toolbox talk topics are amongst hundreds which you can use and cover on your sites and with your teams.

What's important to remember about these topics is that it's not the topic itself that matters as much as it is the engagement, relevance and takeaways from the discussions.

Ideally, after every toolbox talk, people will be able to implement safer processes and practices, or will be more knowledgeable about a particular element of site safety to keep themselves and others more safe.

Keep track of your toolbox talk topics, come up with your own novel topics which are hyper-related to the work and project being delivered, and find more and more safety topics to unpack. You can always go deeper and broader on the safety topics you have covered too - as there is almost always more to learn and absorb.

Looking for a way to document, organise and track your construction toolbox talks?

Use our free digital form below. It makes the whole process simple and painless on site and in the office.