

SAFETY MEETINGS SHOULD BE FUN!

DON'T BE AFRAID to have fun with your safety meetings. Many employers frown at the time spent conducting safety meetings that do not seem to get the message across to their employees. Boring safety meetings can undermine any successful safety program.

Most companies conduct safety meetings with the good intention of avoiding unnecessary injuries and illnesses on the job. But too often the instructor's job is dumped on employees or supervisors who do not have training, guidance, or support. Programs that suffer from boring meeting syndrome are seen by the employees as boring and seen by management as a waste of time.

To avoid the boring safety meeting syndrome, safety trainers should be equipped with supplies, support and continuing education. By teaching instructors' supervisors meeting and communication skills, and by involving employees, companies can strengthen the message they are trying to convey.

Always be watching for safety training materials with a humorous twist. When people laugh and enjoy themselves they remember the event better. The message is clear and it is understood that it may be funny to watch a staged accident, but nobody wants the experience in real life. For instance, use an actual fire extinguisher at a company BBQ to train employees on fire prevention.

However, funny props are not enough. The true secret to successful safety meetings is in the presentation. Here are a few tips for achieving effective, interesting and fun safety meetings:

RESPONSIBILITY: Assign responsibility and identify your safety trainers. Use a staff that is interested and enthusiastic. Do not force the responsibility on someone who will not accept it.

PARTICIPATION: Get employees involved. Safety committees are a good start, but training should interest all of the employees. Topics like CPR and first aid, fire prevention, and self-defense can spark involvement. Encourage employees to point out hazards and take individual responsibility.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: Trainers must have new information. Seminars, classes and web browsing are excellent tools to improve your trainers' skills. Most people are not born meeting leaders, but can usually be trained.

PLANNING: Circulate a proposed agenda well ahead of the meeting to get input from others.

TIMING: Keep the meetings short and frequent. For example, hold 20-minute meetings once a month. Unless the topic forces a long meeting, try to not exceed 60-90 minutes.

FOLLOW-UP: Problems should be assigned out to individuals and those individuals supported. If nothing gets resolved, participants and employees become disenchanted.

CONTENT: Instructors are not expected to be stand up comedians. However, that doesn't mean they should be boring. Don't just read statistics or describe a problem. Speak from the heart. Approach the topics with personal interest. Listen to the feedback and be open and receptive to what participants say.

Check out the Golden Oak Safety Video Lending Library for an easy and economical way to round out your Safety Program!