Can You Name 5 Subjects/Topics That are Most Relevant to the Discussions Off-the-Job Safety?



QUESTION

Can you name 5 subjects/topics that are most relevant to the discussions off-the-job safety?

A. Training programs/protocols for off-the-job employees, seat-belt use in vehicles, defensive driving programs, Slips/Trips/Falls, personal discipline.
B. Telecommuting from home, driver safety, balanced work/leisure programs, personal protective equipment, proper steep and rest habits.
C. Fire Prevention and Safety, telecommuting arrangement, driver safety, telecommuting from home.
D. Personal protective equipment, Fire prevention and safety, Slips/Trips/Falls, Back care, Driving safety.

ANSWER

D. Personal protective equipment, Fire prevention and safety, Slips/Trips/Falls, Back care, Driving safety.

WHY IS IT RIGHT

Each year, the number of workers killed in off-the-job accidents exceeds the number killed at work by a multiple of more than 10. And as many as 15 million workers are injured off-the-job each year. This means your employees have a greater chance of being injured or killed at home or during leisure activities than while at work.

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Some managers believe that what happens to workers when they are not working is

none of their business – but it is. Off-the-job injuries that result in lost time by your workers directly impacts your operations. Just think about it for a minute. What if your superintendent or project manager was injured performing some project around the house and would not be able to return to work for three or four days – even worse three or four weeks or months? How would that affect your business? What if your best operator, welder or mechanic was out of work for several weeks? The fact is that lost work time due to an accident on or off the job affects companies in many ways that may or may not be obvious.

Any accident or illness can affect production, work quality, job costs and even morale. Every time someone is out of work, especially an experienced worker, for any period of time that was not planned for, efficiency and production are affected. It does not matter where the accident happened; the crew is still short a supervisor or worker until the employee returns or is replaced – someone has to pick up the slack.

There are also costs associated with worker injuries. These arise from the need to train a worker who is replacing an injured one, the reduced productivity of a once well-organized crew adjusting to a replacement crew member, overtime to make up for that lost productivity and possibly project delays and penalties. A severe off-the-job injury or illness can increase the company's medical and disability insurance premiums.

Safety off the job is as important to your company as it is to your employees and their families. If your company has an effective safety program in place, it does not take much to go one step further to include off-the-job safety information and training. In fact, providing this important information is often only a matter of adding a few lines to a discussion about safety or a training program. When Toolbox Talks and safety training sessions include off-the-job safety messages, they help employees think about accident prevention beyond the workplace. Those messages can be used to remind workers that injuries suffered off the job can affect them just as much as one sustained at work. Hopefully, they will carry the message with them, share it with their families and friends and apply what they have learned about safety at home and elsewhere.

Employees respect managers who show their concern for workers' well-being both on and off the job. Urging employees to apply the same safety practices at home and during leisure activities as they do at work promotes not only their own health and welfare, but that of their family members, who will follow the example the employees are setting. By reminding workers that safety is an integral part of their life both on and off the job, you are sending a message that their safety – and that of their families – is important to you and the company.

The following 5 subjects are Appropriate in the Discussion of Job Safety

Slips, trips and falls. Falls from an elevation are the leading cause of fatal accidents in the workplace and around the home. Workers use ladders to paint their homes, change light bulbs, clean their gutters, prune trees, or in leisure settings like a tree stand for hunting. No matter where ladders are used, they should be in good condition, well maintained, set up properly and secure. Slips and trips occur when spills are not cleaned up, toys and other objects are left laying on floors and steps and where uneven surfaces exist.

Personal protective equipment. Boating, scuba diving, cycling, shooting,

horseback riding, etc., all require some form of PPE. Without the proper equipment and the knowledge necessary to use it properly, employees and their families take a needless risk. Remind them that PPE needs to be used both inside and outside the work environment.

Fire prevention and safety. The same concerns about handling and storing flammables and combustibles apply at home as on the job. Flammables and combustibles should be stored in either their original containers or those designed to handle the materials, and they should be stored in a safe place away from sources of ignition like stoves or gas-fired hot water heaters. Other fire hazards include fireplaces, wood stoves and electric wires. It goes without saying that matches and lighters should be kept away from children. Remind employees to test and replace smoke alarm batteries, inspect fire extinguishers regularly and develop and practice a family emergency escape plan.

Driving safety. Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of workplace and off-the-job fatalities. Companies that operate fleets of vehicles generally offer some form of defensive driving programs to workers who operate company vehicles. Why not open these training sessions so they include all workers and maybe even family members who would like to attend? It also makes sense to occasionally provide defensive driving messages to all employees.

Back care. Back injuries are the No. 1 cause of time-lost incidents. Regardless of where a worker's back injury occurs, he or she will often lose time as a result of it. Teaching construction workers how to prevent back injuries makes sense. Why not take a little extra time to discuss situations they may encounter at home and during recreation that can cause back injuries?

The loss of experienced personnel through accident or injury affects a company in many ways. No matter how you get the message out, it is important for employees to understand that working safely is extremely important on the job, but working and playing safely off the job is too. Let your employees know that you want them to be safe 24/7 because you care.

WHY IS EVERYTHING ELSE WRONG

Keep in mind the following four things to remember in off-the job situations:

At home:

1. Do you keep all traffic pathways, inside and outside, clear of obstacles?
2. Does the stairway have a handrail? Do you always use it?
3. Do you keep your smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in good operating condition?
4. Does everyone in the family know how to use the fire extinguishers?

In the garage or workshop:

1. Are toxic substances such as cleaning products, paints, herbicides and car products kept locked up and out of the reach of children?
2. Are they all still in their original containers with instructions for safe handling?
3. Are all sharp, powered or other dangerous tools secured and out of the reach of children?
4. Do you always use the correct tool for the job, avoiding makeshift

replacements? Do you use a stepladder to reach awkward places instead of standing on a kitchen chair?

In your car:

1. Do you always make sure everyone is buckled up in their safety belts and shoulder harnesses before driving away?
2. Do you keep your car in good mechanical repair to avoid breakdowns or accidents caused by faulty equipment?
3. Do you walk around your vehicle before backing up?
4. Do you remain alert and aware as you are driving?

Out for fun:

1. Do you wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as eye goggles, helmets, life jackets, shin-pads or gloves for your favorite sports?
2. Do you make sure your equipment is well-maintained and in good condition?
3. Do you avoid using drugs or alcohol especially when you are involved in activities which require concentration and alertness – such as driving?

Not all fatal accidents happen at work. Many of us practice safe work procedures on the job but forget those practices at home. This is somewhat understandable. At work, supervisors and safety managers are constantly watching us.

But when we get home, we become the boss and we get complacent. And we all know that complacency leads to trouble.

Safe Plan of Action

Think in the same safe manner at home as we do at work. Take a moment to consider the task you're about to perform and how you can perform it safer. Here's a **"Safe Plan of Action"** to provide your workers for working around the house safely:

- **Plan ahead.** Make sure you have the proper PPE for the task—gloves, safety glasses, long pants or long-sleeve shirts, steel-toed shoes with steel shanks, etc. The easiest way to do this is to visualize yourself doing the job and try to identify any potential hazards.
- **Check your tools and equipment.**Using the wrong tool can be dangerous. I regularly inspect all my power/hand tools and ladders to make sure they're not damaged and are suitable for the job. I look for signs of obvious wear and tear that could cause failure during use. Remember that falls are near the top of the list as the cause of injuries and/or fatalities.
- **Lift right.**Just like at work, poor lifting techniques are a common cause of injury at home. While lifting or bending, don't strain your body. If you can't lift something easily, use a hand truck (or other lifting device) to move it.
- **Practice ladder safety.**Avoid overreaching while working on ladders or raised platforms. It's much safer to move the ladder and stay as vertical as possible.
- **Guard against heat stress.**During the summer months, if you're going to be working outdoors or indoors in spaces that aren't air-conditioned or well ventilated, remember to drink plenty of water to avoid heat exhaustion. Take regular breaks when needed.
- **Watch for overhead power lines.**Remember how dangerous overhead power lines

are. Get a helper to assist in carrying long items such as metal pipe, extension ladders or other conductive materials.
- **Ask the right question.** Ask yourself: “Is this safe?” This quick question could save your life.