

Talk About Safety, IT MATTERS



TALK ABOUT SAFETY

How important is it to communicate? Communication gets a lot of air time in this old world. It is at the forefront of discussions about marriage, parenting and is even an essential part of things like sports. So, specifically, how important is communication in your work place or when you are at work? Seems like a pretty simple question and most agree it matters. So if we can agree, at least to some extent, that it is important to communicate in all parts of life, then we can agree that it is important when you are working or going out to do a job.

But how do you communicate? What kinds of things do you talk about when it comes to safety and safe work related matters?

For example, do you talk about issues that are obvious safety concerns? Things like working alone or in isolation, when, where and how to get help. Or what about things like chainsaw jobs, working at some kind of height or locking out energy sources, blocking out things that could fall on you?

Most of these things should be covered by a safe work practise, it should be known and referenced and familiar to the whole family or crew. There should be a sense of, that's how we do it here and the, "that's how we do it here" should be well thought out. Higher risk tasks

should have a risk assessment conducted and control measures in place. All of the risk assessments and safe work practices should be recorded, reviewed as required and there should be some way of verifying that you have walked through, oriented, observed and are comfortable with the way that employee or family member does the task.

It sounds like a lot of work but all of those paperwork things are kind of one time things and you are not on your own in dealing with such things. AgSafe (formerly known as FARSHA) has been and will continue to be there to help you to do all of these. But what about the ongoing stuff, what about day to day? Let's be honest, a binder full of papers is useless, if all it is just a binder full of papers. Forgive me for saying this: perhaps it is even worse to have one stuffed full of practices and information than it is to not have one at all because you may function under the delusion that you are doing something when in reality you are not.

It is when the stuff in the book becomes the stuff that you do, that it has value. The record keeping is a requirement for those who are required to function under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, which is anyone who has an employee, is registered with WorkSafeBC or is a Limited company or corporation.

Communicating the stuff in the book is the real deal.

SO WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

It is important that there is a realistic policy in place that accurately reflects the way that you do it - the task you are communicating about has been thought out, appropriate considerations given for the level of risk and ways to eliminate or manage that risk. The paperwork actually makes this easier because once you have practices in place you have a reference point upon which to draw and to help you in communicating this information to a worker.

Some of the things that never get talked about are the ones that should be talked about all the time. For instance near miss incidents: I have seen, heck we all have seen or perhaps been the subject of a near miss. The tractor bucket that swung just past someone, the backing truck that did not see you, the falling object that just missed...the list goes on and it is really quite amazing the almost-wrecks that surround each and every one. When you are in tune to communicating safety in the workplace, developing a culture where safety is every bit as important as animal welfare or machinery maintenance, when you are talking about safety, near misses get discussed. Not buried, laughed off or forgotten, nope they get talked about! What happened? What could have happened? What was the outcome? What could the outcome have been? What can we do to make sure that this never happens again?



A young worker was in an alley way when a stock trailer was backing in. The truck driver swerved a bit and the young worker, who had pressed himself up against the rail fence as tight as he could, was nearly struck by the mirror as the truck swerved as he backed. I mean it was close, real close. This could have been a devastating event for the young worker and the truck driver. Simple discussions with a simple solution. Don't stand in the alley when trucks are backing, hop the fence, get out of the way.

Communication is really not a tough thing to do, it is just tough in the doing.

- Make sure you are taking time to talk about safety.
- Determine your workplace risks.
- Do the paperwork you need to (we'll help!) and don't have paperwork in a binder that is just a make work project, make sure that it is alive and a real part of the way you do business.
- Talk about things like near misses, (you are required to do a simple investigation, and we'll help you figure this out!), then find a solution, don't take for granted the close call you may not get again.

It is tough to get stuff done without communicating and, frankly, it wastes a lot of time. If you don't know where you are supposed to meet a liner or where to look for a cow or how to run a machine, a lot of time is lost. Ask anyone who is older than they used to be, they don't know where it all went, it just got away. Talk about safety, it matters.

We at AgSafe are pleased to help you, you are not in this alone. Few businesses have the option of calling for a service which comes to them, doesn't charge them and offers solutions to the problems they or an officer of WorkSafeBC have identified.

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Best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

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