



# Loss Control *and you*

## Safety Meetings – Make Them Effective

By **Mike Huss**  
Loss Control Supervisor

Mention safety meetings, and you'll likely get one of two responses; fear if you're leading the meeting, or apathy and disdain if you have to attend. If safety meetings are so painful, why do we have them? To find the answer to this you must ask yourself, are you holding safety meetings because you have to or because it's a health and safety program requirement?

It's true the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has a standard that requires employers to instruct employees to recognize and avoid unsafe conditions in their work environment. That being said, you should be holding safety meetings because you want to ensure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to the safe and efficient running of your organization. Basically, you want to share and receive information. You want to know if there are problems in the workplace as well as what is working well. In short, you want regular two-way communication between management and staff. Furthermore, research shows that effective, open, regular communication about safety and health issues is a critical component in preventing injuries and illnesses in the workplace.

To conduct an effective safety meeting it is important to follow established guidelines and procedures. It's also important to establish and follow a meeting agenda. A safety meeting should cover the benefits associated with comply-

ing with safety policies and procedures as well as consequences or penalties for non-compliance.



The following guidelines can help destroy fear and apathy, and make every safety meeting effective:

- Safety meetings should be held at regular intervals during the year. Since safety is a state of mind regular reminders can make workers more conscious of hazards.
- Meetings should be held at a time which is convenient for all attendees.
- To get maximum cooperation try a single topic approach that involves as many people as possible, and confine your talk, suggestions and questions to that single topic. Avoid loading your meeting with generalities, i.e., "be careful with tools" or "watch your house-keeping". Once you deliver your points, make sure everyone understands any new rules or procedures.
- Ideally, each lesson should be conducted in an area that is most applicable to the topic at hand. Select a location near the topic being discussed where people can be comfortable and are free of distractions.

- If you are talking about portable equipment such as ladders or hand-tools, have them with you as props so you may refer to them during the discussion.
- Don't let anything, i.e., phone calls interrupt the meeting.
- Inform attendees in the beginning that you are limiting the meeting to a certain time frame, i.e. 30 minutes. If discussions get lengthy continue it at the next meeting otherwise it will become boring which could turn everyone off.
- Read the lesson or present it in your own words; or you may state the subject of the discussion and ask questions to develop the discussion.
- After your presentation, encourage feedback among attendees.
- Review recent on-the-job accidents or injuries including near misses. Then solicit suggestions about how they could have been prevented or the violation corrected. Do not criticize anyone or anything in front of the group.
- Keep a record of the meeting and review open items at the next meeting. Prioritize any items that need to be corrected, and create a timetable for corrective actions.

## Lessons from Losses

**Courtney Rosengartner**  
Loss Control Technician

A 39 year old customer service representative filed a claim with complaints of intense joint pain in

his upper back, shoulder, neck, arm, wrist and hands from repetitive job duties at a computer workstation. The length of his tenure led to this cumulative injury which after medical examination was determined to be degenerative cervical disc disease, carpal tunnel syndrome and reflex sympathetic dystrophy. The injured worker experienced total temporary disability for over a year. The incurred costs for this claim reached \$200,000.

**ERGONOMICS.** Learn the principles of a safe and comfortable computer workstation and enforce proper position and placement. Areas for improvement include posture, component placement and work environment. The items to review include:

- The top of monitor should be at or just below eye level
  - The worker's head and neck should be balanced and in-line with torso
  - Shoulders relaxed
  - Elbows close to body and supported
  - Lower back supported
  - Wrists and hands in-line with forearms
  - Adequate room for keyboard and mouse
  - Feet flat on the floor
- [Click Here](#) for OSHA's complete Ergonomic Checklist for evaluating a workstation.



## Health and Safety Calendar

By [Kim Coonrod](#)  
Loss Control Manager

### February

[Heart Month](#)

### March

[Workplace Eye Wellness Month](#)

[National Nutrition Month](#)

### April

[National Distracted Driving](#)

[Awareness Month](#)

[Alcohol Awareness Month](#)

## Safety News

By [Kim Coonrod](#)  
Loss Control Manager

### AIHA Launches New Website for Consumers

The American Industrial Hygiene Association® has launched a new consumer-focused website that gives the general public access to resources and information about industrial hygiene and related fields.

The website, which went online December 15th, is a consumer guide to the profession, careers and matters of concern to industrial hygienists. The new site provides information about day-to-day responsibilities of an industrial hygienist, what it takes to achieve an industrial hygiene career and the important issues and challenges an IH professional routinely addresses. For additional information please click [here](#).

### OSHA Creates Snow Storm Website

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has devoted a web page to help keep workers safe during and after winter storms.

The website provides guidance to employers and workers during cleanup and recovery operations. It helps them implement safety measures for snow storm-related hazards and conditions, including:

- Clearing heavy snow in front of workplaces and from rooftops
- Downed power lines
- Traveling on icy roads.

Also included in the list of potential winter storm hazards are carbon monoxide poisoning; hypothermia; falling objects like icicles, tree limbs, and utility poles; and roof collapse. Visit the [website](#) for more information.

### US Department of Labor Continues to Cite Beauty Salons and Manufacturers

In November, OSHA issued citations and fines to two salons for failing to implement precautions to protect workers from exposure to formaldehyde when using certain hair-smoothing products. Formaldehyde can irritate the eyes and nose; can cause allergic reactions of the skin, eyes and lungs; and is a cancer

hazard. Salon owners who decide to use products that may contain or release formaldehyde must follow the requirements of OSHA's formaldehyde and hazard communication standards to keep workers safe. For additional information please see the following News Release.

### EPA Boosts Transparency by Releasing Chemical Info

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is making available to the public hundreds of studies on chemicals that had formerly been treated as confidential business information (CBI). EPA says releasing the data will expand the public's access to critical health and safety information on chemicals made and processed in the United States. The content can be accessed by using EPA's Chemical Data Access Tool from the EPA [website](#).

## Service Focus: Toolbox Safety Series

By [Nick Gustafson](#)  
Loss Control Technician

**Did you know** *FirstComp offers a variety of loss control services? Many of these services are available to all policyholders, for free! Each quarter, we will highlight a FirstComp loss control service and how it can help your clients reduce claims.*

Toolbox Safety Talks are an easy and effective way to communicate safety priorities to your employees. By holding regular safety meetings and documenting topics and attendance you can encourage employee responsibility, reduce claim frequency and severity, and ensure accountability throughout your organization. FirstComp Loss Control has a wide variety of meeting topics available for use by any policyholder. For more information, see our [Website](#).

**For information about any of FirstComp's Loss Control Services, please call (888) 500-3344 or email [losscontrol@firstcomp.com](mailto:losscontrol@firstcomp.com)**

# Focus Class Code: Clerical/ Office Safety



[25 Steps to a Safer Office—National Safety Council](#)

[A Guide to Office Safety and Health—NC Department of Labor](#)

[Accident Prevention—Slips, Trips and Falls—UW-Milwaukee](#)

[Checklist of Recognizing Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards—NSC](#)

[Computer & Desk Stretches—University of Maryland](#)

[Computer Eye Strain—How to Relieve It—Vision Works](#)

[Computer Workstations—OSHA](#)

[How to Choose an Ergonomic Chair—Cornell University](#)

[Indoor Air Quality—OSHA](#)

[Office Safety—NOAA.gov](#)

[Office Safety—Rice University](#)

[Office Ergonomics—ErgoAdvocate](#)

[Office Safety Inspection Checklist—San Diego State University](#)

[Personal Workstation Checklist—UC Berkeley](#)