



# Safety Meeting Outline



**SMO 11-0203**

## **COMMUNICATION ON THE JOB**

*By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control*

How many times have you been in trouble for something you never said? At one time or another, it's happened to everyone. When we multiply that by the number of people we interact with at work, it is reasonable to conclude that miscommunication goes on all the time. Unless you become involved with accident investigations, you probably can't imagine how often we hear, "I told the worker to do it this way, but he/she did it another way. If only he/she had followed the directions or procedures." Then from the injured worker we hear, "No one told me ", or "I didn't know." What is the problem? Miscommunication.

Miscommunication occurs when one person's thoughts are not clearly received or understood by the second party. If you think about this, it's easy to see how this occurs. Studies have shown we actually retain very little of what we hear. After all, when was the last time you hung onto every word spoken by your five-year-old, your spouse, or your boss?

The job of understanding gets even more difficult as more information is added. We probably would not have any problem understanding and retaining all of this instruction, "Go to the store." But what if the instructions were, "Go to the store and get the following ten items ..." How many of those ten items would you remember? Very likely not all ten!

That defines the problem. What is the solution to miscommunication? First, you should be aware of the problem. Create a two-way street of communication. Be willing to ask questions about whatever is being communicated either by you or to you. Humans are mostly visual. So, write down instructions to see them on paper. Either the sender or the receiver of the communication could do this. Then, review these instructions together to be certain they are fully understood.

If using verbal instructions, remember that only so much information can be absorbed and accurately recalled. In giving instructions, summarize the job so there is a clear picture of all that is to be done. Then break the job into several small steps. Have the recipient of the instructions repeat them back to be certain there is no misunderstanding. The instructions given should be carried out to the point where new instructions need to be issued. The giver of instructions then issues additional new directions in retainable-sized increments until the job is completed.

Whether you are the one giving the instructions or the one receiving them, questions are of utmost importance. Questions generate a mutual give and take, which makes up effective communications between individuals. The single greatest cause of miscommunication is failure to communicate at all.



**Be First-Rate: Communicate!**



DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: \_\_\_\_\_ MEETING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Open Meeting & Present safety topic:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. Read minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present:**


4. **Old Business** – Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.
  
5. **Accidents** – Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.
  
6. **Inspection Reports** – Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.
  
7. **New Business** – Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME FINISHED: \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING CHAIRED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_