

# Delivering Toolbox Talks

**Toolbox Talks is the nickname given to a short presentation, usually lasting around 10 to 15 minutes, on a specific work subjects – usually related to health and safety. Toolbox talks are used extensively in many industries and provide a means of focusing a team on a particular issue to raise awareness or act as a reminder.**

## What is it?

A Toolbox Talk is a great way for supervisors and managers to engage with teams in a fairly informal setting. They enable teams to focus on a particularly important work subject – such as highlighting a safety issue, reviewing an incident that has happened or introducing new working practices.

Delivering Toolbox Talks requires some basic presentation skills, although they are designed for (and often best delivered by) regular team leaders and not professional trainers or presenters. If you're preparing to give a toolbox talk, these straightforward guidelines should help:

### 1. Be prepared

- Read ahead, know your subject and what you're trying to get across
- Check that the room is set up for the required amount of people and that any visual aids are working and visible (e.g. presentation projectors, posters)
- Have a start and finish time in mind and stick to them
- Rehearse – go through the talk in advance with someone you can trust to give you feedback

### 2. Have a structure

- Beginning – start with outlining what the talk's about, why it's important and how long you're going to be
- Middle – don't try to cram too much in. Focus on your key messages and use visual aids to help you explain

- End – summarise your key points, emphasise any action you need people to take, especially if your talk is about doing something new
- A 'thank you for listening' always goes down well at the end

### 3. Visual aids

- Presentation slides, posters and lipcharts can all help by adding a visual element to your talk
- Try to keep presentation slides clear and uncluttered
- Good slides should aid your talk, not detract from it. Remember – you and your message are the main focus, not your slides
- Use short bullet points or – better still – pictures to help you and avoid displaying long sentences and paragraphs

### 4. Tell stories

- Use visual aids as a guide but don't read from slides and
- Don't read word for word from your notes

### 5. Listen

- Check with your team that your message is getting across
- Ask if anyone has any questions
- Be patient – check that you understand the question and work on providing a clear answer. Remember that you can always deal with concerns and questions individually, after your presentation is over

### 6. Be confident

- Your toolbox talk will be best received when you make eye contact and speak clearly and with appropriate volume
- Have your 'opening lines' ready – it will help you to steady any nerves and get the session going
- Remember – what you're doing is important and of value to your audience

The Institute has a range of **ToolBox Talks** that are available for you to use. These can be downloaded and can also be used as guides to structuring your own toolbox presentations.

## Why is it important to me?

Toolbox talks can be a powerful means of engaging with your team to get important messages across. They can also provide great development opportunities for people in your team and can offer

a gateway into becoming better and more confident at delivering presentations in a different setting.

IQ believes that knowing how to prepare and deliver a Toolbox Talk are essential skills for professionals working in the quarrying and minerals products industry. It features on our **Skills Wheel** which captures all the key skill and knowledge areas we believe are vital to successful career development in the industry.

## Where Next?

### **Institute of Quarrying**

IQ supports professionals working within the quarrying and minerals products industry through membership and training. These factsheets are produced across a range of topics to share ideas and best practice. Further information can be found via the resources section on the IQ website [www.quarrying.org](http://www.quarrying.org).