

Clear Communication & Hand Signals

TRADE: GENERAL CONSTRUCTION

LEADER GUIDE: 8-12 MINUTES

USE WHAT FITS TODAY

LEADER NOTE

Do not read this sheet word-for-word. Pick the sections that match today's task, point to the actual equipment/work area, and get the crew to answer the questions out loud.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Miscommunication turns normal tasks into surprises. Agree on signals, roles and stop commands before movement begins. A toolbox talk only works if the crew talks back. Good planning names the steps, hazards, controls and ownership, then changes when the work changes. The leader's job is to get specific answers and make it safe for someone to say the plan does not fit the field condition.

A SCENARIO TO DISCUSS

The crew performing Clear Communication & Hand Signals can repeat the rule but cannot point to who owns the critical control or how it will be verified. What responsibility needs to be assigned before production starts?

BEFORE WORK STARTS

- Break the work into steps and have the crew identify hazards/controls for the actual field condition.
- Name who owns each critical control and how the crew will verify it before exposure.
- Ask what changed since the previous plan/shift and update the plan before continuing.
- Use clear, agreed words or hand signals for lifts, backing, equipment movement and team handling.
- Only one designated signal person should direct a movement when the operation requires it.

SAFE WORK SEQUENCE / CONTROLS

- Use clear, agreed words or hand signals for lifts, backing, equipment movement and team handling.
- Only one designated signal person should direct a movement when the operation requires it.
- Stop when signals are unclear, conflicting or lost.
- Confirm instructions when noise, radios, language or visibility make communication difficult.
- Use a repeat-back for critical steps such as energizing, moving or lifting.

QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD CHANGE THE JOB

1. Can someone other than the supervisor explain the next work step, the main hazard, and the control we are relying on?
2. What has changed since the plan was written or since the last shift, and did we actually update the plan for it?
3. Which critical control has a named owner today, and what happens if that person/resource is not available?
4. What concern, near miss, or field conflict raised by the crew should change how we do the work today?
5. What responsibility needs to be assigned before production starts?

COMMON FAILURE POINTS

- Reading the sheet while the crew stays silent.
- Leaving a critical control without a named owner.
- Continuing with the original plan after the scope, crew, equipment or neighboring work changes.

STOP AND RESET IF...

- The crew cannot explain the work sequence, main hazards or controls in plain language.
- A scope, crew, tool, material, adjacent trade or site condition changes without updating the plan.
- Workers raise a concern that has not been resolved or ownership for a critical control is unclear.

MAKE IT REAL ON THE JOB

Have a crew member, not the supervisor, explain the next step, hazard, control and stop-work trigger.

BEFORE YOU RELEASE THE CREW

Before the crew starts, everyone should be able to explain the hazard, point to the control being used today, and name the condition that would make the work stop.

ATTENDANCE & SIGN-OFF

Clear Communication & Hand Signals

Project / Job:		Date:	
Talk leader:		Location:	

CREW ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By signing, attendees confirm they participated in this toolbox talk and had the opportunity to raise job-specific questions. Signatures do not replace required training, qualifications, permits or certifications.

#	Name	Company / Trade	Signature
1			
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QUESTIONS / CONDITIONS / CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

END-OF-TALK CHECK

☐ Crew can point to the main hazard.	☐ Critical control is in place and usable.
☐ The responsible person/check is clear.	☐ Stop/re-brief conditions were discussed.