



Toolbox talks are an invaluable way to ensure your staff understand key workplace policies and procedures. A well run toolbox talk can assist your team to stay safe in the workplace. Regular toolbox talks not only provide your business with a defined process for communicating with staff, they also provide evidence that crucial safety information has been communicated to staff members. When running a toolbox talk, ensure you keep an attendance record of who attended and what was discussed.

Many businesses hold a toolbox talk fortnightly or monthly over a workplace breakfast or end of week catch up. How you decided to implement toolbox talks will depend on the size of your business and workplace practices. The most important point is to hold regular toolbox talks and to facilitate communication BOTH ways – not only to workers but also allowing feedback to management.

The aim of toolbox talks is to reduce risk in your business by ensuring staff understand processes and procedures. These records may also prove invaluable in the event of a workplace investigation.

Remember:

- Have a process
- Communicate the process
- Keep a record of communication

In each edition of OTM we will propose a topic and content for a toolbox talk. This edition we are focusing on fitness to drive .

FITNESS TO DRIVE

What defines a person’s “Fitness to Drive” a heavy vehicle?

A person to be fit to drive a heavy vehicle must:

- Be apparently physically and mentally fit to drive the vehicle.
- Not be affected by either or both alcohol or a drug that affects a person’s ability to drive a vehicle.
- Not have an alcohol concentration in the blood or breath exceeding the amount permitted by law.
- Not have a drug present in the blood or saliva that is not permitted by law.

The HVNL states that for a person to be fit to drive a heavy vehicle, they must be physically and mentally fit to drive the vehicle and not be affected by either drugs or alcohol. Some examples of the noticeable physical signs that you or someone else is affected by alcohol or drugs include:

- Glassy or bloodshot eyes.
- Smell of alcohol or drugs (for example, marijuana) on the breath or clothes.
- Slurred or incoherent speech and talking too loud or too fast.
- Lowered inhibitions – doing or saying inappropriate things.
- Impaired coordination or motor skills – poor balance and clumsiness.
- Sense of confusion appears lethargic or “spaced out”.
- Memory problems or problems concentrating.
- General personality changes or mood swings, irritability or outbursts additionally, for drugs:
 - periods of hyperactivity (“wired”), agitation or giddiness,
 - appears fearful, anxious or paranoid.
- Untreated medical conditions both physical and mental health, eg: diabetics, obesity, seizures etc.

There are also a few questions that you could ask yourself before you undertake any work, these include:

- How are you feeling today?
- Did you get enough sleep last night/today?

SOME SIGNS OF DRIVER FATIGUE/TIREDNESS

- Cannot remember the last few kilometres driven
- Drift from lanes or hit a kerb or median strip
- Experience wandering thoughts
- Yawning constantly
- Have trouble keeping head up
- Difficulty keeping eyes open
- Tailgate or miss traffic signs
- Keep pulling vehicle back into the lane

- When was your last working shift?
 - When is your next working shift?
 - Have you consumed any alcohol or drugs in the last 24 hours?
 - Am I due for a medical check-up?
- These questions appear obvious, but they are often overlooked and can prevent unnecessary accidents/ incidents from occurring.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO ENSURE FITNESS TO DRIVE:

- Prioritise your health and wellbeing.
- Have regular medical check-ups when you feel unwell or when you are injured.
- Respond truthfully to questions about your health status to your employer and GP.
- Follow any prescribed medical advice and treatment from your GP.
- Make the time to exercise, do at least 30 minutes of exercise every day (Can be broken into 3 x 10 minutes sessions).
- Eat healthy and watch your diet.
- Stay hydrated by taking regular sips of water.
- Avoid habits detrimental to your health, such as excessive drinking, smoking and drug use.
- Aim for at least 7 to 8 hours of continuous sleep.
- Engage in recreational activities, especially outdoors.
- Maintain a well-balanced lifestyle be social with family, friends, and colleagues. ●