

# Make Your Safety Moments More Personal

## Three Tips





## Introduction

Does your company do safety moments? If so, what do you consider to be an effective safety moment? Whether it's at the start of a meeting, a shift, or a conference call, we've all likely taken part in some form of a safety moment, where someone briefly talks about a specific topic related to safety. A lot of people do safety moments in many different ways, with varying degrees of relevance to the actual work environment, but they all bring us back to the importance of safety in some way.

## Why Should Safety Moments Be Personal?

Because simply put, safety is personal. We can talk about every possible hazard around us, discuss a dozen ways to mitigate the risks, and remind people all day long about using PPE. Some examples of these topics are:

- "We're working at heights today, so make sure we all wear our fall prevention equipment and tie off properly."
- "We've had two hand injuries in the past month, so we really need to wear the proper gloves and use machine guarding at all times."
- "Guys, it's really hot out there today, so make sure you drink plenty of water and stay hydrated."

While these examples discuss how to work safely, it's important to remember why we are talking about safety in the first place – to make sure we go home safely every day. Furthermore, we are not all identical copies of one another – we bring different experiences, traits, and abilities to work every day, and have different levels of personal exposure based on our own SafetyDNA and the work that we do as individuals.

This applies to supervisors and managers, as well as the people who work for them. Research shows that when employees are more engaged, and when they perceive that their supervisors are engaged, they are more likely to have positive perceptions about their company's safety culture and are more likely to work safely. And I believe that making safety personal at the individual level is an important part of this process.

So, what can you do to make your safety moments more personal? There are many simple ways to accomplish this, but here are a few tips to help get you started.

## 1. Use personal examples

One of the most obvious ways to do this is to simply talk about your own safety experiences. There's something about hearing someone share a recent personal experience, observation, or incident that makes us listen more closely. When we hear a safety moment from someone and we know it's meaningful and relevant to them, it's easier to make a personal connection. And the best part? It's very easy to do!

Do you have any personal safety stories about you, family, or friends? Stories can add a nice personal touch when they are relevant to a current situation. But don't limit yourself to big memorable stories. Just think of any recent things you've seen or read about, as well as past incidents or close calls that relate to any hazard or risk relevant to your workplace. It can be helpful to keep a journal or a list of these and jot down any ideas as you observe or experience everyday situations that relate to safety. These can then be easily turned into an impactful safety moment that you can share with your team.

## 2. Link daily exposures to your SafetyDNA

As I mentioned previously, we are all unique in many ways, and it's the same with our personal safety. Research shows that people differ in terms of individual traits, values, and abilities that impact safety behavior. So, talk about those - starting with yours.

For example, if you know you have a high risk tolerance, and you're going to be working at heights all day, you may have to fight the urge to use the wrong type of ladder or not tie off properly in certain situations because it will take more time to do so. But for someone else on the team, their blind spot might be getting distracted, or not being aware of their immediate surroundings. So they might also be at risk when working at heights, but for different reasons (e.g., forgetting to tie off their safety harness due to distraction, or dropping a tool which then causes a line-of-fire hazard below).

Encourage others to share a potential blind spot of theirs that could put them (and their co-workers) at risk based on the work being done. This can be a personality trait, a habit, or previous experience that is unique to them. Once you set the stage for this, others will feel more comfortable sharing personal examples, which can then lead into a productive discussion about preventive measures and reminders that are tailored to everyone's SafetyDNA and the work being done that day.

## 3. Share successes

Oftentimes, when we do get personal in our safety moments, it tends to focus on someone being injured or a near hit where someone was almost injured or killed. These are impactful, but why not also talk about all the times we did the job safely, and made the right decisions in order to put safety first? Talking about the things that have worked, and the potential harm we prevented proactively, can add a nice touch that is both positive and personal. It encourages others to think about what they can do to prevent injuries, and that anyone can make a difference, no matter who they are.

Identify some things that you have done to reduce risks, or even better, point out successes of someone else on your team and what they have done to promote safety in a similar situation. This can then be applied to the work being done today, and can motivate everyone while giving them specific takeaways and tips they can readily apply.



## Conclusion

By taking simple steps such as these, we can add a personal touch to our safety moments. This will make them more memorable and impactful for our team members, which can, in turn, lead to more awareness and safe behavior, regardless of the job at hand.



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