

Pre-Task Planning

About 9 minutes to deliver

Five minutes before the work, out loud, with the people doing it — the habit that prevents more than any single hazard talk.

1926.20(b)(2) requires frequent and regular inspections by a competent person, and 1926.21(b)(2) requires each employee to be instructed in recognising and avoiding unsafe conditions. Pre-task planning is how those two get done at the level where the work actually happens.

It is not paperwork. It is five minutes, out loud, with the people who are about to do it.

FOUR QUESTIONS

- What are we actually doing? Step by step, in order. Most surprises hide between two steps nobody said out loud.
- What could hurt somebody? For each step. Energy, height, movement, chemicals, other trades, the weather, the ground.
- What are we doing about it? Eliminate it, engineer it out, put a procedure round it, put PPE on it — in that order. PPE last, because it protects one person and only if it is worn correctly.
- What if it goes wrong? Who calls, from where, and what is the address. Rescue at height, rescue from a space, first aid, the nearest hospital.

THE QUESTION THAT CATCHES THE MOST

What is different today?

Almost every incident on a job that has run fine for weeks traces back to something that changed and did not get said out loud:

- new people, or the usual person absent
- different weather, different ground, different light
- a different tool, a substitute material, a hire machine
- another trade working above, below or alongside
- a change to the sequence, or being behind and pushing
- the same task, in a different place

Work that repeats safely for weeks and then hurts somebody almost always changed first.

WHO DOES IT

The crew, not the office. A plan written by somebody who will not be there names the wrong hazards. The people doing the work know where the awkward reach is, which valve sticks, and what everyone does when it is raining.

- Everyone speaks. Silence is not agreement, and the quietest person is often the newest one with the best question.
- Say it out loud rather than reading it out. A form read aloud teaches nobody anything.
- Re-plan when the job changes. A plan from this morning is a plan for this morning.
- If the plan cannot be made safe, the work does not start. That is a real answer and it is available to anybody.

ASK THE CREW

- What is different about today compared with yesterday on this job?
- Which step of today's work are we least sure about?
- If somebody got hurt at the far end of this site, what is the address we would give?

29 CFR 1926.20 · 29 CFR 1926.21

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafety.com

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Pre-Task Planning

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Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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