Stopping Work Meeting Kit



When there are hazards present or some other issue that interferes with being able to perform a work task safely then it is important to feel comfortable to stop the work until it is safe to continue. Many companies stress the importance of being able to stop work without punishment.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

If you believe working conditions are unsafe or unhealthful, bring the conditions to your employer's attention.

Your right to refuse to do a task is protected if all of the following conditions are met:

- Where possible, you have asked the employer to eliminate the danger, and the employer failed to do so.
- You refused to work in "good faith." This means that you must genuinely believe that a reasonable apprehension of death or serious injury exists.
- A reasonable person would agree that there is a real danger of death or serious injury.

SITUATIONS WHERE STOPPING WORK IS NECESSARY

- When there is an unaddressed hazard.
- When the correct personnel are not a part of the task. For example- a company policy states that a spotter is needed while working on an aerial lift and the spotter needs to leave the area. You need to stop work until the spotter returns.
- When you do not have the right tool or equipment for the job. Using tools not designed for the task can lead to an incident.
- When you do not understand the work task or procedures. Stop and get clarification for the task.
- When you do not have the correct knowledge or training to do a task safely.

REASONS TO STOP WORK

- To protect yourself and your fellow coworkers
- To protect property or equipment from damage or loss
- To protect the company's bottom line and reputation

REASONS WHY EMPLOYEES ARE AFRAID TO STOP WORK

- Afraid of punishment from supervisors
- Want to avoid conflict with others
- Do not want to be seen as scared or a “snitch”
- Do not want to slow work down

It is easier said than done to stop work in the name of safety, but it needs to be communicated that it is encouraged and okay to do so. Even if the highest levels of management in a company stress the importance of being able to stop work, a single individual can make it hard for the employees on the work site to actually do so comfortably. Employees need to know different avenues of reporting safety hazards to the management in a company.

SITUATIONS REQUIRING STOP WORK ACTION

Stop Work Authority (SWA) should be initiated for conditions or behaviors that threaten danger or imminent danger to person(s), equipment or the environment. Such as:

- Alarms
- Change in conditions
- Changes to scope of work or work plan
- Emergency situation
- Equipment used improperly
- Lack of knowledge
- Near-miss incident
- Unsafe conditions

STOP WORK AUTHORITY IS A SEVERAL STEP PROCESS

1. **Stop:** When an employee or contractor perceives condition(s) or behavior(s) that pose imminent danger to person(s), equipment or environment he or she must immediately initiate a stop work intervention with the person(s) potentially at risk.
   If the supervisor is readily available and the affected person(s), equipment or environment is not in imminent danger, coordinate the stop work action through the supervisor.
2. **Notify:** Notify affected personnel and supervision of the stop work action. Make the area(s) as safe as possible by removing personnel and stabilizing the situation.
3. **Investigate:** If all parties come to an agreement the condition or behavior is safe to proceed without modifications, (e.g. the initiator was unaware of certain information or circumstances), the affected persons should show appreciation to the SWA initiator for their concern and then resume work. The SWA is complete at this point and no further steps are needed.
4. **Correct**: Modifications to the affected area(s) will be made according to the corrections outlined in the Stop Work Issuance Form. The affected area(s) will then be inspected by qualified experts to verify completeness of the modifications.
5. **Resume:** The affected area(s) will be reopened for work by personnel with restart authority. All affected employees and contractors will be notified of what corrective actions were implemented and that work will recommence.
6. **Follow-Up:** Operations Managers will provide the root cause analysis to the stop work action and identify any potential opportunities for improvement. The Safety Manager will publish the incident details regarding the stop work action to all Operations Managers and employees outlining the issue, corrective action and lessons learned. Management will promptly review all stop work reports in order to identify any additional investigation or required follow-up.

FINAL WORD

When These are just a few of the situations where stopping work is necessary. Individuals need to feel comfortable stopping work to address whatever the problem is to be able to complete the work safely and efficiently. Many times the fixes that will make a job safer are quick and easy. You have the power to make a difference and stop work when it is needed. Despite how uncomfortable some of these situations can be, if an incident occurs it is much more painful for everyone involved.