



Health and Safety Toolbox Talks

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TOOLBOX TALK:

Tobacco Cessation

I. Introduction

Today we're here to talk about heart health and smoking with a focus on tobacco cessation. You don't have to be a smoker or be ready to quit smoking in order to participate. Even if you're a non-smoker, you are still exposed to CO (carbon monoxide) on the job at a level that could have a negative effect on your health. It is important to be aware of the sources of CO so you might be able to come up with potential solutions for limiting exposure. During this talk, I will be sharing some information that may help:

- All workers increase awareness of CO levels/exposure and identify ways to improve heart health
- Smokers think about the role that smoking plays on heart health and how it may impact your day-to-day job performance and overall quality of life
- Smokers identify and access resources to support your quitting efforts

Pass out Tobacco Cessation Handout and encourage participants to refer back to it as talk is given.

II. Why is this Important?

We know that your jobs are physically demanding, and your workdays are long. This environment puts a lot of strain on your body and makes you vulnerable to things like muscle injuries and heart disease. Smoking doesn't help. Not only does it increase your risk for heart disease and cancer, but it also gets in the way of your productivity at work. Smoking makes you more tired, leaves you prone to respiratory problems and slows you down physically. Most of you either have been or will be in this industry for a long time and in order to perform well now and in the future, you really have to take care of your health. Specifically, today, we are talking about the health of your heart.

One very specific way smoking affects your health at work is by raising the level of carbon monoxide in your body. We're all familiar with the CO monitors in

our homes and know that large acute CO exposure can be fatal. Let me tell you a little bit about moderate to heavy CO exposure and how it affects the efficiency of your heart and ultimately your job performance.

Carbon Monoxide operates by taking the place of the oxygen in your body. As your oxygen levels are depleted, your heart has to work extra hard to pump blood to vital organs. As CO levels increase, your body produces more and more red blood cells to help capture extra oxygen. This thickens your blood, making it harder to pass through veins and arteries, increasing the likelihood of clots and putting added stress on your heart and circulation system. When your heart works harder than usual on a regular basis the results can include the following:

- Poor coordination
- Visual impairment
- Trouble breathing
- Fatigue

As a result, you are less able to perform physically demanding tasks and your productivity decreases.

The most common source of CO exposure is direct tobacco smoke, but other sources include those you might be exposed to on a job site including:

- Unvented (inadequately vented) use of Kerosene, gas or propane-powered equipment or tools such as high-pressure washers, concrete cutting-saws, welders, compressors, generators & heaters
- Engine exhaust, from a forklift for example
- Second-hand tobacco smoke

Since many of you are already exposed to some level of CO on the job, it should be obvious that being a construction worker AND a smoker really puts you at risk for illness and can have a negative impact on your job performance.

III. Tobacco Use in the Worksite – Prevalence

Does anyone want to take a guess at what percentage of construction workers smoke?

Turns out it's about 34%, or about one-third of all construction workers, which is a higher percentage than any other industry.¹

Do you think that's representative of this site? Let's see...Show of hands...how many of you...

1. Currently smoke
2. Live with smokers
3. Have tried to quit
4. Would like to quit

IV. Benefits to quitting smoking?

How can quitting smoking improve the workplace? *Solicit ideas from participants.* Include these, if they don't come up.

Quitting Smoking Can:

1. Reduce chances of developing heart disease and cancer
2. Reduce levels of CO in the body and increase physical performance
3. Reduce the number of missed workdays due to illness
4. Increase productivity, by reducing or eliminating smoking breaks on the job
5. Improve the health of co-workers, by reducing exposure to second-hand smoke
6. Reduce safety concerns about fires being started by ashes or burning cigarettes
7. Improve the health of family members when they are not exposed to smoke on work clothes

IV. Barriers to Quitting?

What about being a construction worker makes it difficult to quit? *Solicit ideas from participants.* Examples:

- Only reason to take a break
- Too prevalent on site, would always be in my face
- Way to unwind after a long day

If you want additional information/resources about quitting, but don't want Health Coaching:

- Contact your primary care (or other) physician
 - Smoking counseling + Medication (like NRT, Zyban, Chantix, etc.) can nearly quadruple your chances of quitting smoking (compared to quitting on your own)²
 - Physicians can provide medications for stopping smoking, as well as referrals to a counseling specialist, support groups, etc.
- Contact your health insurance provider
 - Many providers offer coverage for NRT products, as well as prescription medications
 - Some providers also cover counseling support
- Call 1-800-QUIT Now – the Smoking Quitline

IV. Questions and Wrap Up

We have a limited amount of time here, so I want to make sure you take note of the resources we have provided on your cards. Remember that there are plenty of ways to become, and benefits from being, tobacco free.

Resources

Syamlal, G. et al. (2017, October). Tobacco Use Among Working Adults - United States, 2014 – 2016). Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5689107/table/T2/?report=objectonly>

¹ Ward, Marguerite. (2017 November 2). This Japanese company is giving employees who don't smoke 6 extra vacation days. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/02/this-japanese-company-is-giving-non-smokers-6-extra-vacation-days.html>

² Fiore, M.C., Jaen, C.R., Baker, T.B., Bailey, W.C., Benowitz, N.L., Curry, S.J., and Dorfman, S.F., Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update. 2008, Clinical Practice Guideline. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. May 2008.

KICK THE TOBACCO HABIT

Start repairing

It's NEVER too late to quit tobacco—and the benefits start immediately

- 20 minutes after quitting, blood pressure drops
- 8-12 hours after quitting, carbon monoxide level in blood returns to normal
- And the body repair only continues!

Ask about our carbon monoxide measuring—onsite today!

- How are your lungs affected by tobacco smoke?

Think smokeless is safe?

- Chewing tobacco and snuff contain 28 cancer-causing agents
- Smokeless tobacco users have an increased risk of oral cancer, esophageal cancer, pancreatic cancer, heart disease, gum disease, and mouth lesions



A CENTER FOR WORK, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING PROJECT

RESOURCES TO HELP QUIT

Smoking resources

Mass. Smokers' Helpline

800-QUIT NOW (English) / **800-8-DEJALO** (Spanish)

American Lung Association

800-LUNG-USA

SmokefreeTXT

Text JIQUIT" to IQUIT (47848)

Download the "QuitPal" app on your smartphone



Smokeless tobacco resources

National Cancer Institute

877-44U-QUIT

The National Cancer Institute Cancer
Information Service

800-4-CANCER

The National Network of Tobacco Cessation
Quitlines

800-QUIT-NOW

Download the "QuitPal" app
on your smartphone

Ask your insurance company or union about
insurance benefits for quitting tobacco.



STOP TOBACCO

Start repairing

In 8 hours

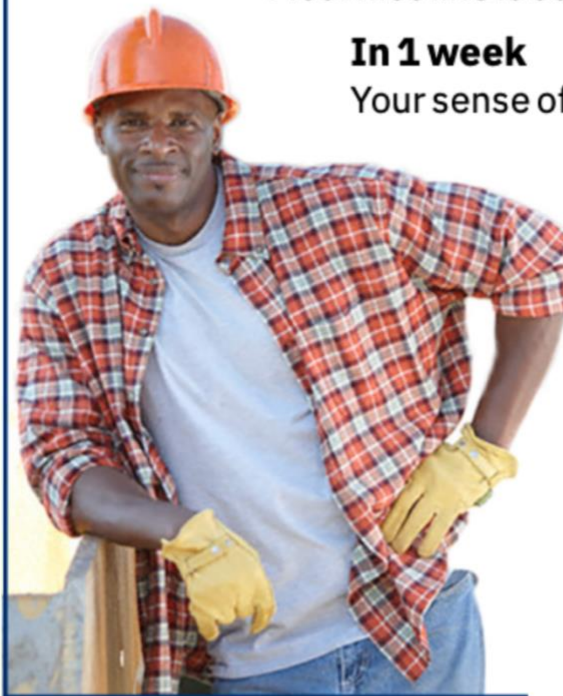
Excess carbon monoxide is out of your blood

In 5 days

Most nicotine is out of your body

In 1 week

Your sense of taste and smell improves



In 12 weeks

Your lungs regain the ability to clean themselves

In 3 months

Your lung function begins to improve

In 12 months

Your risk of heart disease has halved

In 1 year

A pack-a-day smoker will save over \$4,000

In 5 years

Your risk of a stroke has dramatically decreased



Help for TACKLING TOBACCO

**There's a lot of help & support for you
or your family:**

National Cancer Institute
877-44U-QUIT

Mass. Smokers' Helpline
800-QUIT NOW (English)
800-8-DEJALO (Spanish)

**The National Network of
Tobacco Cessation Quitlines**
800-QUIT-NOW

American Lung Association
800-LUNG-USA

The National Cancer Institute
Cancer Information Service
800-4-CANCER

SmokefreeTXT
Text "QUIT" to IQUIT
(47848)

Apps to help you quit:

QuitGuide
[smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps/
quitguide](https://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps/quitguide)

quitSTART
[smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps/
quitstart](https://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps/quitstart)

