



Task Planning

Task Planning Safety Talk

Today more than ever, demands at work are at an all-time high. Productivity is recognized and rewarded in the workplace. Working fast however does not always equal working productively and efficiently. When we go to do a work task it is very important to plan out the time and resources it might take beforehand. Poor planning and inefficiency in the work process creates many problems and affects our ability to work safely and productively.

Task Preplanning

When more than one work task needs to be completed in a day and there is not adequate time or resources to complete the tasks, there is a breakdown in the workers' day. It is important up front to know what time and resources are needed for a task. This planning should start at the management level and they should get input from any subject matter experts as well as the workers involved in the task. This process can be informal, but especially for complex tasks, there should be a written document outlining the steps of the task. After reviewing the steps of the task, the necessary training, personnel, equipment, permits (if needed), and time needed for the task can be determined. When all of this is determined up front and all of the necessary resources are made available for the work task ahead of time, everything can run efficiently. Having all the required resources also allows for workers to take the time to ensure the proper safeguards are in place during the task.

Adjusting Work Plans

While we can plan all we want, there will still be changes that we will have to account and adjust for. Things such as equipment breakdowns, employee absences, and weather are just a few common problems that could throw off the original for the task. For critical tasks especially- there should always be back up plans thought of in case of changes. When things come up and changes need to be made, the new plan has to be implemented thoughtfully. If new equipment or personnel have to come in on a work task, take the time to let everyone involved know of the changes. Look at the original plan again and see if any additional resources or time will be needed after the change.

Weather Considerations

Weather is one item that should always be planned for during every task. In new construction for example, there is a lot of grade work and excavations every day. If there is rain in the forecast for later in the day then the supervisors and operators should have a plan of where the run-off water will go and accumulate. Having a plan to adjust your work area before weather arrives could mean the difference between a few hours and a few days of downtime in a work area. Not only will this planning and



adjustment lead to production, it will also allow everyone in that work area to work safer after the rain event.

Discussion point:

-What other considerations should we take account for when planning for a work task?