



Three Way Communication

Three Way Communication Safety Talk

Communication is critical to working safely and efficiently. While the process of verbal communication seems straight forward there are many issues to consider. This safety talk focuses on the issues revolving around verbal communication and using a best practice called three way communication to improve communication between employees during work tasks.

Common Problems to Consider with Verbal Communication

There are many issues that affect whether or not our desired message is getting across to the receiver correctly. Some common issues to consider:

Culture Barriers- Many people speak English as a second language and may not understand what is being said. Even in different geographical regions of the same country cultural barriers can exist.

Assumptions- Making assumptions about what someone is trying to say or will say can be a dangerous mistake at work. Making assumptions about what message someone is trying to convey can be affected by mood, distractions, time pressure, etc.

Mixed or Confusing Messages- Poor word choices or long winded messages can lead to confusion.

Verbal communication through face to face conversations can experience any or all of the issues mentioned above. Any issue or problem with the message being sent is increased when using a radio or phone to verbally communicate with coworkers. Along with the above-mentioned issues there are other issues when communicating with these devices such as interference, poor reception, background noise, lack of nonverbal cues, etc.

A tool to help address the above issues to ensure that the correct message is being sent and understood is "three-way communication", also called the repeat back process.

Three Way Communication as a Best Practice

Three way communication can be very effective in validating the message being sent between the sender and receiver thus reducing the chance of a mistake occurring during a work task.

How Three-Way Communication Works

The basic outline of three-way communication is as follows:



1. The sender states his message to the receiver.
2. The receiver acknowledges the communication by repeating the critical information in the communication back to the sender. If the receiver did not understand the communication then he has to ask the sender for clarification.
3. The last step is the sender confirms the message is correctly understood by the receiver or if it is not understood the sender has to indicate that the message is not understood and the three-way communication process has to start over.

Here is a basic scenario in a workplace: Two mechanics are aligning a belt on a conveyor and they are communicating via radio since they are not close to each other. The process involves powering the conveyor to align the belt.

Sender: I am away from belt, you are clear to energize the belt to track it into place.

Receiver: You are away from the belt, I can energize the belt now.

Sender: That is correct, clear to energize.

Summary

There are many issues in every form of communication. While verbal communication seems like a straight forward way to convey a message compared to an email or text, there are still many issues that can be present while using it. Three-way communication can be critical in verifying a message is understood during a work task which can make all the difference in whether a worker is injured or not. Discussion point: What are some work tasks that we do here and should utilize three way communication during the task