

Toolbox Talks



Preventing Suicides in Construction

Suicide is a critical public health issue in the United States and a leading cause of death among working age adults.

There is no single cause for suicide. In many cases, personal stressors and health challenges combine to create overwhelming feelings of hopelessness. Most individuals who are struggling show one or more warning signs through their words or actions. It's important for managers and coworkers to be aware of these changes and be prepared to respond.

Why This Matters

- Workers in the construction industry have a suicide rate roughly four times higher than the general population.
- Work-related stressors, like demanding schedules, seasonal work, physical injuries, and time away from home can take a serious toll on mental health.
- Suicide deeply affects not only individuals, but families, teams, and entire communities.

5 Things you Should Know:

1. **Be Aware:** Recognize that mental health and suicide can affect anyone, even those who seem "tough." Changes in behavior, mood, social withdrawal, unusual comments or post, these can be warning signs.
2. **Pay Attention:** If you notice something off, a coworker isolating, acting out of character, expressing hopelessness, take it seriously.
3. **Reach Out:** Show empathy, listen without judgement, and let them know you care.
4. **Take action:** If someone is in immediate crisis, stay with them. Contact emergency services or call/text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
5. **Learn More & Share:** Use trusted resources to educate yourself and your team.



Implement Policies and Programs

- Review policies and procedures for how work is managed to determine if additional flexibilities are needed.
- Evaluate your overall work environment, such as customer interactions, productivity schedule, pace of work, etc., to determine if there are workplace stress factors you could address.
- If your organization has an employee assistance program (EAP), remind employees about the benefits.
- Start the conversation. Normalize mental-health check-ins just like toolbox talks for physical safety.
- Display resources. Post this flyer, and place posters where everyone can see them.

Share Resources with Your Team

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org/chat for 24/7, free, and confidential support.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "TALK" to 741741 or visit crisistextline.org from anywhere in the USA to connect with a trained Crisis Counselor for free 24/7.

