

How to Conduct a Tailgate Talk

A Tailgate Talk is a brief training session on a single safety topic, typically held around the tailgate of a truck or another convenient spot. It should last 10-15 minutes with a small group of workers.

KEY POINTS

- Choose one safety topic per session.
- Keep it short and concise.
- Hold sessions with 6-10 workers.
- Ensure the location is comfortable and safe.
- Allow time for questions and answers.
- Document the training.

CHOOSE SAFETY TOPICS

- Focus on recent events or ask employees for suggestions.
- Use newsletters and local news for additional ideas.

PLAN LOGISTICS

- Limit sessions to 6-10 workers.
- Hold sessions earlier in the week (avoid Monday mornings).
- Conduct sessions weekly, dedicating specific time for training.
- Keep sessions under 15 minutes.

PREPARE AND CONDUCT THE SESSION

- Include visual aids and handouts.
- Familiarize yourself with the materials beforehand.
- Keep the presentation informal and avoid technical jargon.
- Involve workers in the discussion.
- Allow time for questions and have workers sign a training acknowledgment sheet.



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Louisiana's Tailgate Talk Series

10 Flagger Safety Tips



The Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Center serves training needs of local transportation agencies.

We are part of the Louisiana Transportation Research Center (LTRC), which is a cooperative effort between the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Louisiana State University (LSU).

Timely Safety Briefings

10 Tips For Flagging in a Work Zone

1. Be Visible

Wear high-visibility, reflective clothing (Class 2 or 3). At night, make sure it's visible from 1,000 feet.

2. Know the Plan

Review the traffic control plan before your shift. Understand your role and traffic flow.

3. Stay Alert

Watch traffic, workers, and equipment. No phones, music, or distractions.

4. Use Clear Signals

Use standard hand signals or STOP/SLOW paddles. Communicate clearly with your crew.

5. Stand Safely

Stay on the shoulder in clear view of drivers. Avoid curves, hills, or shaded spots.

6. Prepare for Emergencies

Know how to respond to accidents, weather changes, and aggressive drivers.

7. Command Respect

Stand tall, make eye contact, and signal with authority. Drivers respond better when you project confidence.

8. Be Courteous

Stay calm with drivers. Don't argue—call law enforcement if needed.

9. Stop Traffic Safely

Only stop traffic when necessary—when workers or hazards are in the road.

10. Stay Out of the Line of Fire

Position yourself where you can't be hit—by cars, equipment, or debris. Always leave yourself an escape route.

Flaggers are the first line of defense in a work zone. Your alertness, confidence, and communication help protect the entire crew—and the traveling public. It's not just a job; it's a critical safety role that keeps everyone moving and gets everyone home safe.

Resources

Flagging Safety 101

<https://threesixtysafety.com/flagging-safety-101/>

10 Safety Tips for Work Zone and Flagger Safety

<https://www.onlinesafetytrainer.com/10-safety-tips-for-work-zone-and-flagger-safety/>

National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse

<https://www.workzonesafety.org/>

Tailgate Talk Resources

Louisiana LTAP

<https://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltap/tailgate-talks.html>

NLTAPA

<https://nltapa.org/informationexchange/nltapa-tailgate-talks/>

T2 Tailgate Talks

https://www.cti.uconn.edu/cti/T2_Tailgate_Talks.asp

