

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

Winter Event Safety Tips for Public Works Employees



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

Staying Ready for a Louisiana Winter

Before the Storm

Check stockpiles of salt, brine, sand, and fuel. Refill early—supplies disappear quickly once cold weather arrives.

Gather and inspect equipment such as motor graders, wheel loaders, and backhoes. Make sure all are fueled, serviced, and winter-ready.

Coordinate with contractors ahead of time. Confirm availability, rates, and contact information before emergencies occur.

Activate emergency response plans early—ensure everyone knows their role and who to contact if conditions worsen.

Recommended Equipment to Have Ready:

- Motor graders, loaders, backhoes, and skid steers
- Snow/ice removal materials (brine and salt)
- Lighting, signage, and barricades for icy roads

Water and Utility Considerations:

Staff key utility sites 24/7 during extreme cold or power outages.

Monitor system demands—freezing temperatures can cause record-high water usage and breaks.

Assist critical customers such as hospitals or shelters by ensuring access to water and emergency transport routes.

Expect frozen lines and water pressure issues; have crews and equipment ready for quick repairs.

Lessons Learned

Past winter events across Louisiana have taught us valuable lessons:

- Use 4-wheel drive trucks when possible—many standard vehicles can't handle icy or flooded roads.
- Keep a stock of paper maps in each vehicle—GPS and digital tools may fail in emergencies.
- Plan for water system challenges, including frozen lines and surges in usage.
- Replace raised pavement markings damaged by plows or cold-weather cracking after the event.

Resources

GOHSEP

Winter Preparation

<https://gohsep.la.gov/about/louisiana-hazards-plus-threats/winter-weather/winter-preparation/>

NOLA Ready

Safety Tips - Snow & Ice Removal

<https://ready.nola.gov/plan/winter/>

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

