



**Daily Toolbox Talk: Encourage & Welcome New Ideas.**  
**Tuesday, May 7, 2024**

**Encourage and Welcome New Ideas**

Whether it's the first construction site you've been on or your 50th, you've likely heard someone say, "We're all responsible for safety." If we all agree that each of us is responsible for our safety and those around us, isn't it important to encourage and welcome new ideas that contribute to safe outcomes?

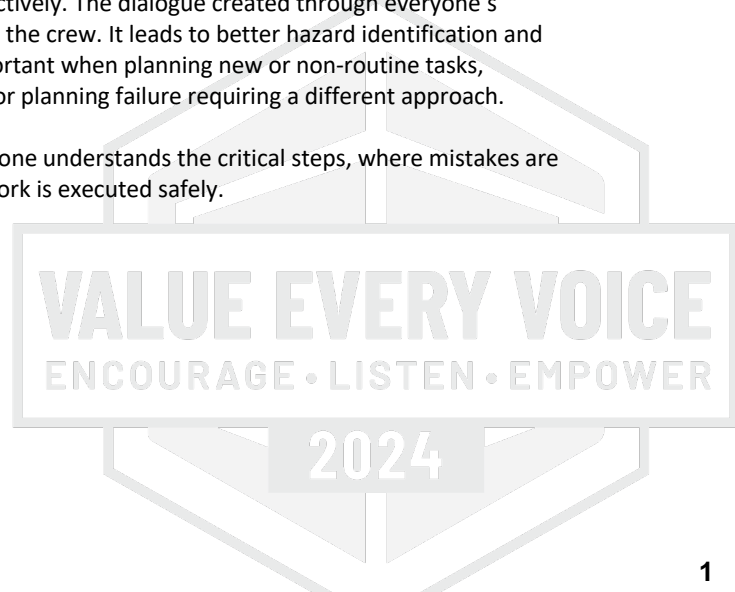
If everyone is accountable for safety, we need to be willing to listen and respond to everyone's concerns and suggestions. Construction sites are filled with people of all experience levels and varying tolerance for risk, many of whom are also working together for the first time. Safety is the thing that connects us because, despite any of the other differences and competing priorities, we all need to feel safe and understand how to best sustain it.

Do you want to work in an environment where someone might not warn you of a safety hazard, or wouldn't bring forward a safety improvement idea that benefits everyone because they think their voice doesn't matter? Would you continue to speak up if you thought you would be ignored? Imagine that anyone, regardless of role or experience level, who cares enough about job safety has the power to speak up.

We must work together to foster work environments that allow workers to speak up and be heard on project sites. We can communicate this through safety orientations and training, daily task planning and safety briefings, and regular safety meetings in the field. We build confidence in people when we demonstrate we mean what we say about having a voice. We can do that by acknowledging or crediting those who have spoken up and taken prompt action to address their concern or support their new idea to make the workplace safer. We must all do our part to let others know that we value their voice by consistently saying "Thank You" when they use it.

When initiating an interactive conversation, asking everyone for their opinion may not be enough. Valuing every voice makes sure all team members have a chance to add ideas and are not restricted to the perceived best practice of the loudest voice on the crew. Instead, they are empowered to ask questions, challenge norms, share different ideas for improvement, and solve problems collaboratively and more effectively. The dialogue created through everyone's contribution to the discussion brings forward all the expertise on the crew. It leads to better hazard identification and safety improvements in the work process. This is especially important when planning new or non-routine tasks, executing high-risk activities, troubleshooting a work challenge, or planning failure requiring a different approach.

In these instances, two-way dialogue is essential to ensure everyone understands the critical steps, where mistakes are most likely to happen, and the agreed-upon process to ensure work is executed safely.





# CONSTRUCTION SAFETY WEEK

For example, when a plan is communicated, ask specific questions to allow people to discuss concerns about the process and approach:

- “Do you see any safety issues that we missed?”
- “Is there anything we’re asking you to do that doesn’t make sense, or is unsafe?”
- “Is there anything we’re asking you to do that you’ve never done?”
- “Do you have everything you need to do the work safely?”

Including everyone in the discussion and helping them to understand the “why” behind how things are done and the “how” to do something, leads to better understanding and safer outcomes. Creating a safe space for team members to ask questions helps them meet the plan’s expectations, learn individually, and build confidence in their abilities.

You may find that the questions they ask may call out procedural deviations that have become normalized, or they may identify existing hazards that get overlooked by the experts they’re taking direction from. Construction is a team sport. By encouraging and welcoming new ideas and sharing our past experiences and lessons learned, we can be sure we all return home safely at the end of the day.

