

Safety Champion Tools

By sharing the commitment to follow procedures, you can improve your organization's safety culture. As Mark Twain said, "It's better to be prepared a thousand times than dead once."

Here are the tools you can use to be a Safety Champion for your organization.

Accountability

The most critical tool of all is accountability.

Taking ownership is about taking initiative and doing the right thing for the business. It's about taking responsibility for results and not assuming it's someone else's responsibility.

Simply put, accountability is the opposite of passing the buck.

Self Motivation

Having the positive attitude and the initiative to work well without round-the-clock supervision is a vital safety champion tool for all employees. Not only does it demonstrate reliability and commitment, but it also shows that you can fit effectively into an organizational structure without the need for constant oversight.

Self-motivated employees:

- ◇ Have the qualifications, training, and are fit for duty
- ◇ Take a proactive approach to their work
- ◇ Focus on accuracy and quality by following procedure steps in the proper order and not using undocumented procedures

Communication

As a safety champion tool, communication is not about using big words or giving exciting speeches. Able communicators can:

- ◇ Adjust their tone and style according to their audience
- ◇ Listen, understand, and act effectively on instructions
- ◇ Explain complex issues to co-workers and customers alike
- ◇ Read and understand documents
- ◇ Write in an understandable manner, especially in maintenance records

Leadership

Leadership is a safety champion tool you can show even if you're not directly managing others. It can be thought of as a collection of various other skills, such as:

- ◇ A positive attitude and outlook
- ◇ The ability and willingness to communicate effectively
- ◇ An aptitude for both self-motivation and motivating others
- ◇ Mentoring others
- ◇ Setting the right example for others

Responsibility

Self-awareness is a seldom talked about, but highly valued, safety champion tool. Knowing when to accept responsibility for any mistakes you have made demonstrates a healthy level of humility and a willingness to learn and progress.

A responsible person will:

- ◇ Always do the right thing, even when no one sees it
- ◇ Always follow the procedures
- ◇ Say something when procedures are unavailable or unclear
- ◇ Help co-workers to comply with the procedures

Teamwork

Like leadership, good teamwork involves a combination of other safety champion tools. Working in a team toward a common goal requires intuition and the interpersonal wisdom to know when to be a leader and when to be a listener.

Good team players:

- ◇ Help and guide team members
- ◇ Share information openly and willingly
- ◇ Foster an environment of trust
- ◇ Are perceptive, as well as receptive, to the needs and responsibilities of others

Problem Solving

Problem solving doesn't just require analytical, creative, and critical skills, but a particular mindset. Those who can approach a problem with a cool and level head will often reach a solution more effectively than those who cannot.

This is a safety champion tool that often relies on strong teamwork, too. Problems don't always need to be solved alone. The ability to know who can help you reach a solution – and how they can do it – can be a great advantage. Consider the adage “Two heads are better than one.”

Good problem solvers:

- ◇ Report missing or unclear procedures
- ◇ Can assess the impact of various solutions
- ◇ Continue to seek a solution if the first solution doesn't work

Decisiveness

Decisiveness combines a number of different abilities – the ability to put things into perspective, to weigh the options, and to assess all relevant information.

Perhaps most importantly, decisiveness requires the ability to anticipate the consequences, good and bad. To be an effective decision maker, you must:

- ◇ Have an awareness of the situation
- ◇ Be fully dedicated to a procedure-driven culture
- ◇ Consider as many facts and conditions as possible
- ◇ Understand that making no decision is, in fact, a decision that may have consequences

Ability to Work under Pressure and Time Management

Aviation maintenance jobs often come with demanding deadlines and occasionally high stakes. Organizations prize employees who show a decisive attitude, a persistent ability to think clearly, and a capacity to compartmentalize and set stress aside.

Time management is closely related to the ability to work under pressure, as well as within tight deadlines. Employees who manage their time well are able to effectively prioritize tasks and organize their work, while adopting an attitude that allows them to take on new tasks and deadlines. These qualities are shown by:

- ◇ Acknowledging that it takes time to follow procedures
- ◇ Making effective decisions in time-pressed situations
- ◇ Taking fast action to fix unsuitable procedures
- ◇ Knowing that fixing it right the first time takes less time than rework
- ◇ Valuing quality and safety over a hasty repair/inspection

Flexibility

Naturally, people can be wary of leaving the comfort zone formed by their collection of on-the-job skills.

Flexibility is an important safety champion tool, in that it demonstrates an ability and willingness to acquire new skills, as well as the open-mindedness to take on new tasks and new challenges. Workers show flexibility by:

- ◇ Adapting successfully to changing situations
- ◇ Planning ahead but having alternative options in case things go wrong
- ◇ Persisting in the face of unexpected difficulties
- ◇ Increasing commitment to following procedures, especially on unfamiliar tasks

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

A good negotiator knows how to be persuasive and exert influence, while sensitively seeking a solution that will benefit all parties.

Similarly, conflict resolution depends on strong interpersonal skills and the ability to establish a rapport with co-workers and customers alike.

Employees demonstrate their negotiation and conflict resolution skills by:

- ◇ Remaining calm and level-headed, even when faced with a difficult or unexpected situation
- ◇ Using leadership and teamwork skills to earn the trust and respect of co-workers
- ◇ Asking questions and actively listening to the answers
- ◇ Ensuring that physical and psychological stress is minimized for themselves and others
- ◇ Using written procedural information to support a position or action