

TOOLBOX TALK  
NO.52

Safe Systems of Work



Managing health and safety is an integral part of our jobs. Risk assessing the workplace and putting sensible measures in place to control them and more importantly, making sure they stay controlled is what reduces accident/incident rates and the occurrence of ill-health an environmental damage but more importantly ensures we **all go home safely.**

A method statement is quite simply a document that lists how a particular task or activity will be carried out. It details the possible dangers/risks associated with a particular part of the project and/or task. It includes methods of control and how the work will be managed safely. Everyone involved in a job for which a method statement has been written, should read it, or have it explained to them and by signing it, you acknowledge that you understand its contents.

The process requires:

- *Analysing the task*
- *Identification of hazards and risk assessment*
- *Introducing controls and formulating procedures*
- *Instruction and training in the operation of the system*
- *Monitoring of the system*

Whilst working for Lucas, should you find that work pressures increase, especially as there are times that main contractors apply pressure to complete tasks, we would like you to and expect you to, consider these simple questions prior to undertaking any task on our behalf, apply these considerations rigidly and please do politely decline to proceed with any work if you are not comfortable and happy that the work is safe to do.

1. Do I have a Safe Place of Work?
2. Am I confident that I have and understand the agreed Safe System of Work?
3. Do I have safe tools and materials to complete the work/task with?
4. Do I have the skills to undertake the work safely?
5. Do I have competent supervision?
6. Do I know what to do in an emergency?
7. Do I feel Safe?

**SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK COMPONENTS:**

1. **PEOPLE** – This includes safe and healthy behaviour – sound knowledge, skills, risk and control awareness, the willingness to conform with the system
2. **EQUIPMENT** – This covers good design and health/safety specification of plant, machinery and equipment, taking into account the work that it is to do, the environment and ergonomic factors, inspection and maintenance requirements.
3. **MATERIALS** – Consideration to safety and health issues in both the raw material state and as the finished product. Consideration of use, handling, storage, transport and safe disposal of waste must be established.
4. **ENVIRONMENT** – Establishment of elements in the workplace that surround people – effective control of heating, lighting and ventilation, safe levels of noise and vibration, effective control of dust, fumes, radiation etc.. Safe and effective means of access and egress and good standards of welfare etc...

**If you do not understand the hazards and risks, please discuss this with your manager/supervisor. By discussing this, it will offer a clearer understanding of the hazards and risks and how the safe systems of work will reduce those risks.**