

Communication

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.
– George Bernard Shaw

What it is

Sharing information with the right person, in the right form, at the right time and, most importantly, checking the message has been received and understood.

Why do it

Communication is a key factor in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy forestry operation. It ensures that all workers are fully aware of the plan for the day and their role in keeping themselves and others safe. It is, however, not just about communicating good practice – it is also about creating a culture of safety to prevent incidents and ill health. Good two-way communication ensures that everyone is aware of the risks, as well as the preventive and protective measures necessary to control these risks.

How to do it

- ▶ Allocate time to discuss health and safety issues
- ▶ Have open and honest discussion on health and safety issues at all meetings (e.g., tailgate meetings) as well as during the working day
- ▶ Record health and safety related decisions made at meetings
- ▶ Keep written and verbal communications simple, to the point, and easy to understand
- ▶ Communicate face-to-face as much as possible
- ▶ Encourage two-way communication, with both the giver and recipient of the information taking responsibility to check messages are received and understood
- ▶ Use different ways to communicate the same message
- ▶ Keep written communications (e.g., H&S minutes and posters) up-to-date
- ▶ Provide the tools necessary for effective communication
- ▶ Develop the communication skills of all workers.

Track it

Use the following checklist to track whether your communication practices are on track or need action.

In our crew/team, we...	Seldom	Sometimes	Always
Allocate enough time to discuss health and safety matters			
Have the information we need to stay safe and well			
Discuss health and safety issues openly			
Raise health and safety concerns			
	Urgent action required	Action required	On the right track

Remember...

Workers intentions to adopt safe working practices are influenced by the usability and usefulness of the safety communications they receive.