

Safety Hour Discussion Pack

Topic: Learning from our Lookouts

Purpose of the discussion:

To explore the challenges facing Lookouts, how they can overcome these challenges, and how this learning can apply to all of us and the things we do.

The Lookout role is arguably one of the toughest because it requires long periods of complete focus – just one slip in concentration can have life-threatening consequences. Since 2009 we have lost two Lookouts to fatal injuries, and between 2013 and 2014 there have been 16 serious incidents involving Lookouts. Investigations have confirmed that awareness and focus have contributed to these incidents.

Discussion points: Use below to plan your facilitated discussion. Remember, you don't have to have all the answers – the role of the facilitator is to create an engaging discussion where everyone identifies and commits to solutions.

Discussion points	Supporting notes
How easy is it to miss a train?	<p>Q: If a train approaches from 16 metres away at 30mph – how loud will it be?</p> <p>A: As loud as a normal conversation</p> <p>Q. If a train approaches from 16 metres away at 30mph – how long do you have to react?</p> <p>A: Two seconds</p>
What might cloud your judgement?	<p>Ask the group to brainstorm all the things that might cloud your judgement when looking out for trains, or carrying out other activities like driving.</p> <p>Some good examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather and climate conditions • Team relationships • Fatigue • Hydration • Mental health/stress • Physical fitness • Drugs and alcohol

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<p>What do we need to do to keep ourselves and each other focussed?</p>	<p>Ask the group to brainstorm all the things that could help individuals and teams to stay focused.</p> <p>Could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should all speak up if we feel unable to perform a task safely • We should also be supportive in challenging each other if we think the person may not be able to perform the task safely. • Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) –wear clothing to suit the weather and climate conditions. • Drink at least every three hours to keep yourself hydrated. • Eat well Eating a balanced diet helps to maintain concentration levels and all round health and wellbeing • You should aim to get around 7.5 hours each night but there’s no exact number because every one is different. • Stress and mental health issues can impact concentration, awareness and ability to focus. Always speak to your line manager if you suspect you or a colleague is struggling with mental health. • Drugs and alcohol - Even being just slightly over the drink/drive limit can significantly impact how quickly you can react – think about how this could affect you when driving? • Prescribed medication can significantly impact our concentration levels – make sure you talk through any side-effects with your GP and always inform your line manager.
<p>What will you do differently when you leave today?</p>	<p>Where possible, ask the group to commit to do something differently as a result of having the discussion.</p> <p>It doesn’t have to be a huge change – sometimes it’s the little things that count. For example, setting off for work 20 minutes earlier to allow for traffic and make for a less stressful drive...</p>