



TAILGATE

HUMAN-CENTRED HEALTH and SAFETY TRAINING MATERIALS

TOOLBOX TALK – Mental Load Is a Safety Hazard

Date:

Crew / Site:

How to Use This Safety Talk

This is a short, practical conversation guide - not a lecture. Read it in your own words make it personal for your crew. You don't need to memorize anything or sound polished. If it feels natural, it will land better.

Opening

Before we get started, I want to talk about something we don't always put on a hazard assessment – mental load.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, we're required to take every reasonable precaution to protect workers. That doesn't just mean equipment, guards, or PPE. It also means how work is planned, supervised, and carried out.

Most injuries don't start with broken equipment. They start when someone is distracted, rushed, or overwhelmed.

We all bring things to work - bills, deadlines, family stress, poor sleep. I do too. That's real life. But on this site, focus matters, because our decisions affect more than just ourselves.

This isn't about blame. It's about awareness. Because when we recognize mental load as a real safety risk, we're doing our part to work safely and meet our responsibilities under the Act.

Why This Matters

Distraction is a real hazard – even though it might not show up on a hazard assessment.

Our mental load affects:

- Our reaction time
- Our decision-making
- Shortcuts and skipped steps
- Irritability and communication

The Tool: The 30-Second Reset

Before you start a task, just take a quick moment.

1. Stop where you are.
2. Take one slow breath.
3. Then ask yourself:
 - Am I rushed?
 - Am I frustrated?
 - Am I distracted?

If the answer is yes, slow the task down. And if you need to, come talk to me. That's what I'm here for.

Quick Crew Check-In (Optional)

I'm going to ask a couple quick questions. There are no right answers - just say what comes to mind.

- What makes work harder on busy days?
- What helps you stay focused?
- And for this crew, what does support look like?

Take a second. I'm listening.

Supervisor Note:

Mental health is part of working safely. **Noticing early is a strength, not a weakness.** If your head isn't on the job, neither are your hands. Mental focus is part of working safely.

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Attendance Sheet

Company/Site: _____

Date: _____ Supervisor Name: _____

Workers in Attendance:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

11 _____

12 _____

13 _____

14 _____

15 _____