

DOT HazMat Safety Toolbox Talk

A ready-to-run 5-minute crew talk · Hazardous Materials · 49 CFR 172.700–704 (HMR)

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How to run this talk (5 minutes): Gather everyone who loads, unloads, handles, packages, labels, or ships hazardous materials — not just drivers. Read each talking point aloud, ask the discussion questions, close with the one rule, and pass the sign-in sheet on page 2. This is an awareness refresher — it does **not** satisfy the DOT training requirements in 49 CFR 172.704 on its own.

Who Counts as a “HazMat Employee”

- **It's probably you.** Anyone who loads, unloads, or handles hazmat; packages, labels, or tests packaging for transport; prepares it for transport; is responsible for its safe transport; or drives a vehicle carrying it (49 CFR 171.8). Job title doesn't matter — the function does.
- **Training isn't one class.** 172.704(a) requires **general awareness, function-specific, safety, and security awareness** training — plus **in-depth security** if your company needs a security plan.
- **90 days and 3 years.** New or reassigned employees must be trained within 90 days, and until then work only under direct supervision of a trained employee. Recurrent training is required at least once every **3 years** — sooner if job functions or the rules change; if a required security plan is revised, covered employees get the revised in-depth training within 90 days of implementation.

Know Your Material — Classes, Labels, Placards

- **Nine hazard classes:** 1 explosives · 2 gases · 3 flammable liquids · 4 flammable solids · 5 oxidizers & organic peroxides · 6 poisons · 7 radioactive · 8 corrosives · 9 miscellaneous.
- **Labels go on packages; placards go on the vehicle or bulk container.** They must match what's actually inside — that's how the next handler knows what they've got.
- **Never ship or accept** a package that's unmarked, mislabeled, damaged, or leaking. Stop, keep people clear, isolate the area, and report it.

Shipping Papers & the Emergency Response Guidebook

- **Shipping papers must be accurate, readily recognizable, and available** (49 CFR 177.817(e)). At the controls: within immediate reach while restrained, and either visible to a person entering the cab or in the driver-door holder. Away from the controls: in that door holder or on the driver's seat. They're the first thing responders look for.
- **The ERG is the orange book.** Look a material up by name or 4-digit ID number for the guide page, initial isolation distance, and protective actions.
- **In an emergency, protect yourself first** — don't become a second casualty. Keep people upwind and away, then get the papers and ERG info to responders.

Security Is Part of the Job

- **Hazmat is a target.** Security awareness training (172.704(a)(4)) covers the security risks of transporting hazmat and how to **recognize and respond** to threats.
- **Watch for:** people you don't recognize near the dock or a load; unattended or unsecured shipments; unusual or rush orders; odd delivery locations; and anyone asking what you ship, when, and by what route.
- **Do something about it — per your plan and role.** If your duties are covered by the company's required security plan, follow its access-control, ID-verification, load-security, attendance, and reporting procedures. Report anything suspicious immediately — but don't confront a suspicious person unless your plan, role, and training direct you to.

Discussion — Ask the Crew

1. Which of the DOT training types apply to your job — and when were you last trained? (Recurrent training is due at least once every 3 years.)
2. What hazard class is the material you handle most, and what label or placard goes with it?
3. Where are the shipping papers and the ERG right now, and how would you look up a spill of what we ship most?
4. If you saw someone you didn't recognize near a hazmat load on our dock, what exactly would you do?

The one rule to remember today: DOT doesn't go by job title — if you handle, package, or ship hazardous materials, you're a **hazmat employee**, you must be trained, and recurrent training is required **at least once every 3 years** (sooner if your functions or the rules change). Know your material, keep your papers accurate, and report anything that looks wrong.

This talk is a refresher, not DOT training. 49 CFR 172.704 requires each hazmat employee to be trained in general awareness, function-specific, safety, and security awareness — plus in-depth security where a security plan applies — with records kept and retraining every 3 years. The **DOT HazMat Training Kits** cover each required type: full video (available in English or Spanish), employee quiz & answer key, presenter's guide, sign-in sheet, and certificate — reusable for every new hire. [SafetyVideos.com/DOT_HAZMAT_Training_s/68.htm](https://www.safetyvideos.com/DOT_HAZMAT_Training_s/68.htm)

Toolbox Talk Sign-In Sheet

Attendance record · DOT HazMat Safety Toolbox Talk · 49 CFR 172.700–704

Date

Location / Facility

Presented by

#	Name (print)	Signature	Job title / Department
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By signing above, each attendee acknowledges they participated in this DOT HazMat safety toolbox talk on the date shown. Retain this sheet with your training records. **Note:** attendance at a toolbox talk is **not** DOT hazmat training — keep it with, not in place of, each hazmat employee's training records under 49 CFR 172.704(d) (name, completion date, training materials, trainer name & address, and certification that the employee was trained and tested).