

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Communication

The key to any relationship and the ability to accomplish a task, whether at home or in the workplace, is effective communication. In the workplace, the repercussions of poor communication can become serious quickly resulting in poor productivity, unmotivated employees, and safety issues.

Because of its importance, we are even rated on communication competencies within our annual performance evaluations. MSU Human Resources defines good communications as:

Effectively conveys information and expresses thoughts and facts. Demonstrates effective use of listening skills and displays openness to other people's ideas and thoughts.

- Assimilates information from all levels and functions within University and communicates correct meaning directly to employees.
- Communicates effectively adjusting communication styles to different situations, audiences and people.
- Creates an environment that ensures open communications.

There are an endless amount of scenarios of when you should speak up and have an honest conversation to address an issue. Below are some examples of when you need to stop and communicate a safety issue to get it resolved prior to continuing work.

- When you see someone working unsafe.
- When you do not have the proper training or knowledge to do the task at hand.
- When you do not have the right tools or personnel to complete the task correctly.
- When a safeguard is not implemented.
- When a hazard is present that could injure you or others.

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Tips for Effective Workplace Communication:

- ✓ **Handle conflicts with diplomacy.**
 - Nip issues in the bud while they are small; prevent small issues from exploding into major crisis.
 - Keep an open door, encouraging employees to voice concerns (along with solutions).
 - Keep conversations confidential.
 - Go to management or administration with policy issues, while having suggested changes.
- ✓ **Revive the art of conversation.**
 - Don't totally rely on text and emails; messages can sometimes be misinterpreted.
 - Phone calls and face-to-face conversations will usually produce quicker & more complete results.
- ✓ **Give good feedback.**
 - Be clear and detailed.
 - Offer solutions when presenting problems.
 - Praise and give recognition – don't only communicate the problems. A simple "thank you" goes a long way.
- ✓ **Be transparent; don't keep secrets.**
 - Be honest about success & failures.
 - An open administration/management team helps encourage open employees.
- ✓ **Don't just hear, really listen.**
 - Keep a mental checklist of important points the other person is making during a conversation.
 - Repeat a summary of what the other person said back to them, then ask, "Is that right?"

Sources:

- <https://www.safetytalkideas.com/safetytalks/communicating-issues/>
- <https://www.hrm.msstate.edu/forms/>
- <https://money.howstuffworks.com/business/starting-a-job/10-tips-for-effective-workplace-communication1.htm>