

Department Safety Representative (DSR) Basics: Effective Communications



Additionally, all employees should be regularly informed and reminded of the safety status of their work areas, facilities and operations. A DSR is just the person for the job. When, how and what to communicate and in what form is also key.

Think about the challenge of communication...



The Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw once said "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." This quote contains a fundamental truth as you contemplate the challenge of human communication in light of our busy schedules, competing tasks, in a Too Much Information Age and our human forgetfulness. What did I just say...? But seriously (effective) communication is the most important aspect of organizational success including health, safety and security in the workplace. A Department Safety Representative (DSR) has many duties none of which may be more important than effective communication. A DSR who effectively communicates ensures that persons with the authority to make decisions on workplace safety, health and security efforts have the information and reminders necessary to resolve these concerns in appropriate time frames.

Question: *DSR, when you received your new assignment were you Instructed by the prior DSR or your Administration about your role and duties?*

Answer: Probably not or at least not as you might have liked. Each DSR must create channels for communication with administration, supervision and staff.

Question: *Does everyone in your office, section, or department know their DSR?*

Answer: Upon appointment a DSR must establish connection with those who have responsibility for safety in the department/agency/district; including the department/agency head, managers, and supervisory staff.

(New DSRs, does the Safety Division Office have your name and contact information? Call us at 951-955-3520 and let us know!)

Just A Reminder...

OSHA 300 Logs & Summaries will be sent to departments by the end of January. Summaries must be posted in a area accessible to staff from February 1st until April 30th.

The primary role of a DSR is to keep the department/agency/district head and supervisory staff informed (notify in writing preferred) of key safety issues, concerns and recommend solutions.

In addition to notification duty, DSRs may be assigned the following communication tasks:

- *Distribute the monthly Safety Division Newsletter*
- *Review and distribute safety inspection reports*
- *Receive, review and distribute hazard reports*
- *Review and distribute Accident/Incident reports or employee complaints*

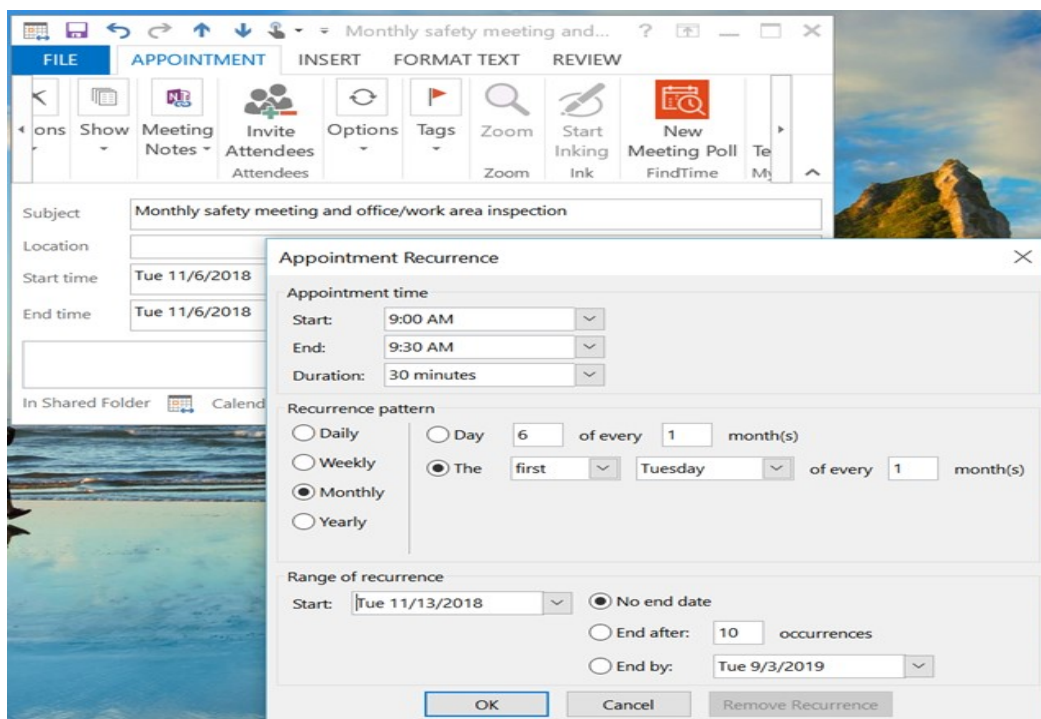
Follow up with corrective action for reported hazards and facility work orders, and document and distribute safety committee meeting minutes, and etcetera.

Note: A DSR should always document safety program correspondence and file in a shared administrative folder or location for 3 years.

DSRs may conduct regular staff safety meetings, share investigation and inspection report findings and advise others immediately of hazards. It is important the DSRs obtain approval from Administration before communicating sensitive (possibly confidential) information.

Need a reminder system to manage your hats, other duties as assigned? Outlook offers many ways to schedule, track and remind you (and others) of required safety program activities. Create Email reminders, Reoccurring Meetings and Appointment Calendar Items and Tasks.

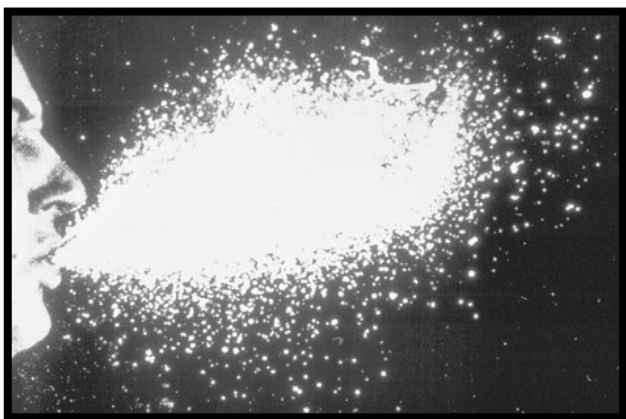
If you are confused by anything in this communication, contact your; Department Safety Coordinator or County HR Safety Division office at 951-955-3520.



(Gnome picture courtesy P. Lloyd @ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/paulrobertlloyd/34137484723/>)

Influenza, also known as "the flu", is a contagious respiratory illness caused by Influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death...

How Flu Spreads



Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by tiny droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get the flu by touching a surface or object that has the flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

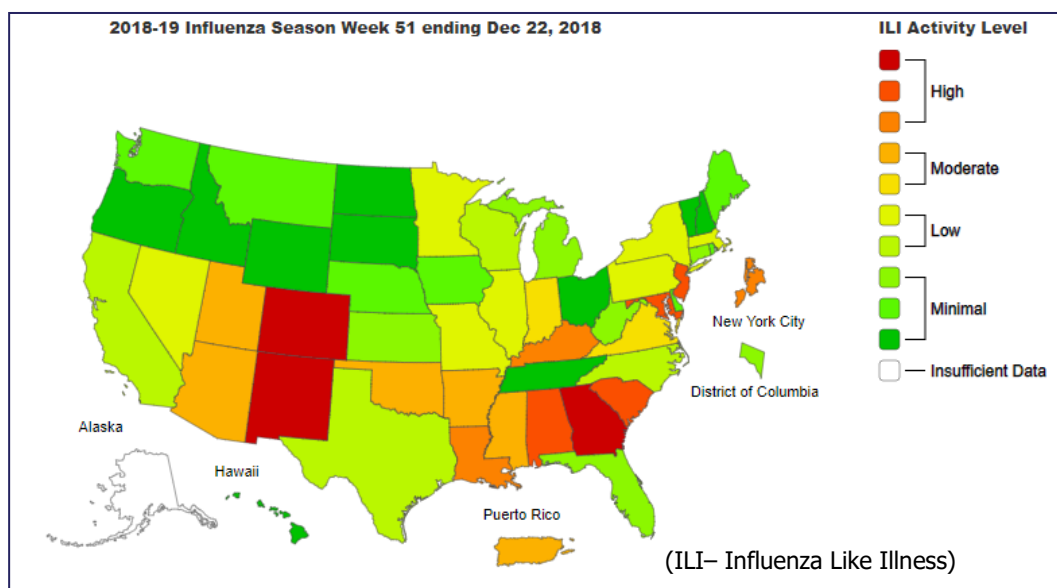
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Signs and Symptoms of Flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms that usually start suddenly, not gradually:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in young children than in adults.



Vaccination ???

Why should people get vaccinated against the flu?

Influenza is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently, but millions of people get the flu every year, hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized and thousands or tens of thousands of people die of flu-related causes every year. An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to help protect against flu. Vaccination has been shown to have many benefits including reducing the risk of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and even the risk of flu-related death in children.



Knowing the facts is half the battle...

- Flu viruses used in flu shots are inactivated, so they cannot cause infection.
- Even healthy folks can benefit from being vaccinated.
- CDC guidelines recommend yearly vaccination against influenza for people with chronic illness, everyone older than 6 months of age, including pregnant women.
- The influenza virus changes (mutates) each year. So, getting vaccinated each year is important to make sure you have immunity to the strains most likely to cause an outbreak.
- The only way to catch the flu is by being exposed to the influenza virus
- Any flu infection can carry a risk of serious complications, hospitalization or death, even among otherwise healthy children and adults.
- Getting vaccinated is a safer choice than risking illness.



Flu Vaccines Available at Riverside University Health System Community Health Centers

For More Information Call: **1-800-720-9553**

www.rivco-familycarecenters.org

Flu Vaccine Appointments Encouraged\Walk-in hours 8:00 am - 11:00 am & 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Did you know it's against California law and County policy to operate a motor vehicle while also using a wireless device? [County of Riverside Safety Manual Section 4001 "Vehicle Use and Safety Guidelines"](#) states "Vehicles shall be operated in a responsible and prudent manner in accordance with local, state and federal regulations" and "Employees are personally responsible for any traffic citations issued while operating vehicles on County business." Avoid the citation and arrive alive, don't drive while distracted.

DRIVE SAFE! IT'S THE COUNTY WAY

Here's the American Automobile Association's [Top 10 Tips to Avoid Distractions While Driving](#)

#10 Fully focus on driving. Do not let anything divert your attention, actively scan the road, use your mirrors and watch out for pedestrians and cyclists.

#9 Store loose gear, possessions and other distractions that could roll around in the car, so you do not feel tempted to reach for them on the floor or the seat.

#8 Make adjustments before your get underway. Address vehicle systems like your GPS, seats, mirrors, climate controls and sound systems before hitting the road. Decide on your route and check traffic conditions ahead of time.

#7 Finish dressing and personal grooming at home before you get on the road.

#6 Snack smart. If possible, eat meals or snacks before or after your trip, not while driving. On the road, avoid messy foods that can be difficult to manage.

#5 Secure children and pets before getting underway. If they need your attention, pull off the road safely to care for them. Reaching into the backseat can cause you to lose control of the vehicle.

#4 Put aside your electronic distractions. Don't use cell phones while driving – handheld or hands-free – except in absolute emergencies. Never use text messaging, email functions, video games or the internet with a wireless device, including those built into the vehicle, while driving.

#3 If you have passengers, enlist their help so you can focus safely on driving.

#2 If another activity demands your attention, instead of trying to attempt it while driving, pull off the road and stop your vehicle in a safe place. To avoid temptation, power down or stow devices before heading out.

And number 1 is...

#1 As a general rule, if you cannot devote your full attention to driving because of some other activity, it's a distraction. Take care of it before or after your trip, not while behind the wheel.

FIVE SECONDS

is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting.

At 55mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field.

NHTSA



Source: 2009, VTTI