

**CARLIN**  
HEALTH SAFETY & TRAINING

**GUIDE TO**

**Safety Briefings - How to make them engaging**



Focused on delivering the right solutions for our clients

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING SAFETY BRIEFINGS

CARLIN



**Imagine a workplace where everyone moves confidently, knowing they're safe. This isn't a distant dream—it's a reality that begins with one powerful tool: the safety briefing.**

A well-delivered briefing is not just a box-ticking exercise; it's a moment to inspire, to awaken that deep sense of responsibility within every individual. When we gather to share safety messages, we're not just communicating procedures, we're safeguarding lives, and each person plays a vital role in that story.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has made it clear: effective communication is key to preventing accidents. Yet, many briefings fall flat, becoming mere background noise. But imagine if, instead, these briefings captivated your attention. Picture yourself leaning in, hearing not just instructions but a story—your story—where you become the lead character who makes the right choices, who keeps colleagues safe, who ensures everyone returns home unharmed.

The size and type of your business doesn't matter when it comes to delivering the safety briefing and don't assume that the big corporates are doing it better than the small business. Balfour Beatty are one recent example; A 62-year-old worker fell 10 metres to the ground and died during the construction of a new facility at the University of Birmingham. The HSE investigation found the incident could have been prevented had Balfour Beatty implemented better controls and put in place better communication between contractors. When safety briefings engage the mind and the heart, they

become unforgettable. A well-crafted briefing taps into that part of the brain responsible for action. Stories unlock attention, and they also stir emotion—triggering the release of oxytocin, the trust hormone that bonds us to others and reinforces why safety is not just a task, but a shared responsibility.

Now, imagine walking into your next briefing, ready to listen, ready to absorb every word, because you know that what you're hearing could save a life. You are no longer a passive recipient of information, but an active participant in creating a safer workplace. Engaging safety briefings, driven by stories, don't just inform—they transform. They transform how we see our roles, how we take action, and how we protect one another. Isn't it time we all step into this story, a story where safety comes first, always?

This may sound complicated and time consuming and there is the question of resource and cost to create and deliver impactful safety briefings. However, with the average cost of an employee being off work for at least a week with a work-related injury or illness costing £8,300 or a fatal employee accident costing on average £111,500 – can you afford not to?

## HOW TO MAKE SAFETY BRIEFINGS MORE ENGAGING

Effective safety briefings are more than just presentations—they are critical opportunities to connect with your audience and ensure that vital safety messages resonate deeply. To truly engage participants and encourage active learning, it's essential to adopt a more dynamic approach.

Here's how you can transform your safety briefings into interactive, memorable experiences.

### INTERACTIVE TECHNIQUES AND AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT

One of the most effective ways to engage your audience is through interactivity. Rather than simply talking at attendees, encourage active participation. Use techniques such as:

- **Q&A sessions** where employees can ask questions or share their insights on safety procedures.
- **Group discussions or breakout sessions**, where smaller teams can discuss specific safety scenarios and present solutions.
- **Live demonstrations or hands-on practice**, especially for high-risk tasks, to reinforce learning by doing.

Engaging participants with these methods ensures they are mentally and physically involved, making the briefing far more memorable and impactful.

### LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY IN SAFETY BRIEFINGS

Technology can also play a pivotal role in making safety briefings more engaging.

- **Interactive polls and quizzes** can be used during briefings to check understanding in real time, giving immediate feedback and making learning more dynamic.
- **Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR)** tools can immerse employees in simulated high-risk environments, allowing them to experience potential hazards and practice safe responses without any real-world danger.
- **Short, engaging videos** that showcase specific risks or procedures can break up longer briefings and make complex safety concepts easier to grasp.



**EVERYONE**

**HAS**

**A STORY**

## The Power of Story Telling to Convey Safety Messages

Storytelling is a powerful tool for communicating safety messages, as it engages both emotions and logic. Utilising **Freytag's Pyramid**, a classic narrative structure, safety messages can be crafted with a clear exposition, rising tension, and a resolution—helping the audience connect emotionally with the risks and solutions. This framework holds attention and ensures that key points resonate deeply.

**Simon Sinek's** "Start with Why" approach further enhances storytelling by aligning safety protocols with a purpose or vision, making it easier for people to see why safety matters. This fosters buy-in from employees and stakeholders, as they connect to the underlying mission rather than simply following rules.

The **Identifiable Victim Effect** demonstrates how people are more moved to act when safety is presented through the story of a single, relatable individual rather than abstract statistics. Highlighting a real-life incident, for example, can personalise risks, making the message more compelling and memorable.

On a neurological level, good stories trigger the release of oxytocin, the hormone associated with empathy. This brain chemistry shift creates a sense of trust and emotional engagement, making the audience more receptive to adopting safe practices.

By crafting safety messages through stories, organisations can achieve both intellectual understanding and emotional impact, leading to safer behaviours in the workplace.

### HOW TO IMPLEMENT - SOME EXAMPLES

**We've provided some examples on the next pages of how businesses of different sizes, budgets and industry specific challenges have tackled making their safety briefings more engaging and ultimately their businesses more productive and safer places to work.**

---



**Using these tools, you can create a more stimulating and interactive environment, transforming safety briefings into engaging learning experiences that captivate the audience.**

**Incorporating these strategies into your safety briefings will not only enhance engagement but also improve retention, helping to support the overall workplace culture.**



**A small UK-based garage with just five employees faced challenges in conducting effective safety briefings. Time constraints and a fast-paced work environment made it difficult to engage the team fully in traditional safety talks.**

**To address this, the garage adopted a more efficient and interactive approach to make briefings impactful while fitting into their tight schedule.**

#### Interactive Techniques and Audience Involvement

Given the small team size, the garage introduced short, focused safety discussions rather than long presentations.

These 10-minute daily “toolbox talks” encouraged each employee to participate by:

- Asking direct, relevant questions, like how to safely handle car lifts or avoid slips in oil-spill areas.
- Encouraging team-based problem solving, where employees discussed solutions to common risks they face in the garage, such as safely working under vehicles or using power tools correctly.
- Demonstrating quick, hands-on techniques for tasks like proper lifting, reducing strain when working on vehicles, or using PPE correctly.

This collaborative approach allowed employees to engage with the content quickly and meaningfully.

#### Using Real-Life Examples to Drive the Point Home

To keep the briefings relevant and relatable, the garage shared real-life examples of incidents that had occurred in similar environments. For example, a story of a

mechanic who suffered an injury due to improper use of a jack stand brought home the importance of following safety procedures. These stories were brief but impactful, reminding the team of the real-world consequences of ignoring safety practices.

#### Leveraging Technology in Safety Briefings

As the team were short on time, the garage used short video clips or digital reminders to reinforce key safety points. A quick 2-minute video on safe handling of machinery could be watched before starting the day's work, keeping safety top of mind.

Additionally, they introduced mobile quizzes that employees could complete on their phones at their convenience. These quizzes, covering topics like chemical safety or fire prevention, provided quick checks of knowledge without taking too much time away from tasks.

#### Outcomes

By adapting these methods, the small garage was able to deliver quick, interactive, and engaging safety briefings that fitted within their tight schedule. Employees participated more actively, absorbed key safety messages, and retained critical information despite the brief format. This led to improved safety awareness, fewer near-misses, and a stronger commitment to safety within the team.

This case study shows that even in a small, time-constrained environment, interactive and efficient safety briefings can be implemented to make a significant impact on workplace safety.



**A garden centre noticed that their safety briefings were not capturing the attention of employees, leading to low engagement and occasional safety lapses.**

**To address this issue, the garden centre implemented new strategies to make safety briefings more interactive, relevant, and impactful, using real-life examples and technology.**

#### Interactive Techniques and Audience Involvement

The garden centre shifted from standard presentations to interactive safety briefings. They introduced:

- **Q&A sessions** allowing employees to voice concerns or ask specific questions about safety issues, such as handling heavy plant pots or working with hazardous gardening chemicals.
- **Small group discussions**, where staff could work together to solve real-world safety problems like safe lifting techniques or ladder usage in the outdoor nursery area.
- **Hands-on demonstrations** were conducted on-site, focusing on tasks such as safely operating gardening tools or managing stock deliveries. Employees were encouraged to practice these procedures and get immediate feedback.

This approach encouraged staff to engage actively with the content and with each other, ensuring that safety procedures were well understood and applied.

#### Using Real-Life Examples to Drive the Point Home

To make the safety messages more relatable, the briefings included real-life incident stories. For instance, the team discussed an incident at another garden centre

where an employee sustained an injury from improper use of a ladder. Sharing these real stories helped make the risks more tangible and demonstrated the importance of following safety protocols.

#### Leveraging Technology in Safety Briefings

The garden centre incorporated interactive quizzes to test employees' knowledge on important safety topics, such as chemical handling or fire safety. Instant feedback allowed the team to identify gaps in understanding and address them on the spot.

Additionally, they began using short training videos showing correct practices for tasks like unloading deliveries or pruning large plants. These visual aids broke up the briefings and made the safety instructions easier to follow.

#### Outcomes

By adopting interactive techniques, real-life examples, and technology, the garden centre saw a significant increase in employee engagement during safety briefings. Staff participated more actively, retained safety information better, and showed improved compliance with health and safety protocols. As a result, workplace accidents decreased, and employees developed a stronger safety mindset.

This case study demonstrates how even in environments like a garden centre, engaging safety briefings can be adapted to involve staff and ensure safety practices are understood and applied effectively.



**A civil engineering company recognised that its safety briefings were becoming monotonous and failing to engage employees effectively. While attendance was mandatory, active participation and retention of crucial safety protocols were low.**

**To improve outcomes, the company adopted a more engaging approach by incorporating interactive techniques, real-life examples, and modern technology.**

#### Interactive Techniques and Audience Involvement

The company restructured its safety briefings to encourage active participation. Instead of delivering one-sided presentations, they introduced:

- **Interactive Q&A sessions** where employees could raise concerns or ask questions about specific hazards on site, such as working at heights or in confined spaces.
- **Team-based safety discussions** where crews were split into groups to discuss relevant safety scenarios, like trench work or crane operations, and present their solutions.
- **Live demonstrations of safe procedures** for operating heavy machinery or using personal protective equipment (PPE), allowing workers to practice and receive feedback.

These techniques fostered a culture of collaboration and engagement, where employees felt more involved in ensuring workplace safety.

#### Using Real-Life Examples to Drive the Point Home

To make the briefings more impactful, the company incorporated real-life incident stories from the civil engineering industry. For instance, they shared a case where improper scaffolding led to a serious injury on a similar site. These examples personalized the safety

lessons, helping employees understand the real-world consequences of unsafe practices.

#### Leveraging Technology in Safety Briefings

To further enhance engagement, the company introduced interactive quizzes during safety briefings to test employees' knowledge on topics like excavation safety or fall protection. This allowed instant feedback and highlighted areas for improvement.

Additionally, the company invested in Virtual Reality (VR) simulations, where employees could virtually experience high-risk tasks like bridge construction or tunnel excavation. These immersive simulations allowed workers to navigate hazardous situations and practice safe procedures in a controlled environment, improving hazard awareness without exposing them to real danger.

#### Outcomes

By adopting these methods, the civil engineering company saw a marked improvement in the effectiveness of their safety briefings. Workers became more attentive, participated actively, and demonstrated a stronger understanding of safety protocols. The combination of interactive elements, real-life examples, and cutting-edge technology made the safety briefings more engaging and memorable, contributing to a reduction in accidents and increased compliance with safety procedures.

This case study highlights how civil engineering companies can transform safety briefings into dynamic learning experiences that actively engage employees and foster a safer working environment.



**A large warehouse was facing challenges with employee engagement during safety briefings. Attendance was high, but retention and implementation of safety protocols were lacking.**

**The warehouse leadership decided to overhaul their safety briefing approach, incorporating interactive techniques, real-life examples, and modern technology to boost engagement and foster a stronger safety culture.**

#### Interactive Techniques and Audience Involvement

The warehouse team revamped their briefings by shifting from passive presentations to interactive sessions. Instead of one-way communication, they introduced:

- **Live Q&A sessions** where employees could ask questions about safety concerns in their day-to-day roles.
- **Small group discussions**, where teams discussed safety scenarios relevant to the warehouse, such as handling heavy equipment or proper lifting techniques. This fostered collaboration and real-time problem-solving.
- **Hands-on demonstrations** for high-risk tasks like forklift operation or managing hazardous materials, allowing workers to practice correct procedures and receive immediate feedback.

These techniques ensured employees were actively engaged, contributing their own experiences and learning from each other.

#### Using Real-Life Examples to Drive the Point Home

During the briefings, the warehouse introduced real-life incident stories from within the company and the wider industry. For example, one session highlighted a near-miss event involving improper stacking of materials.

Hearing about the consequences of a similar event and how it was averted made the safety message more personal and relatable, driving home the importance of vigilance.

#### Leveraging Technology in Safety Briefings

To further modernize the safety briefings, the warehouse incorporated interactive polls and quizzes during sessions. This allowed employees to test their knowledge in real-time and see the collective results, highlighting areas needing further clarification.

The leadership also invested in Virtual Reality (VR) simulations, where workers could experience virtual warehouse environments and navigate high-risk scenarios safely. This immersive approach helped employees practice responses to hazards in a controlled, risk-free setting.

#### Outcomes

By implementing these strategies, the warehouse saw a significant improvement in both engagement and safety outcomes. Employees were more attentive during briefings, actively participated in discussions, and demonstrated a clearer understanding of safety protocols. The interactive and technology-driven approach made safety briefings more memorable, ultimately leading to a reduction in accidents and near-misses.

This case study demonstrates how interactive techniques, real-life examples, and the use of technology can transform safety briefings from routine sessions into powerful tools for building a safer workplace.



**A large care home provider with multiple locations across the UK faced challenges in delivering consistent and engaging safety briefings. Staff were often pressed for time, and traditional methods of communication were failing to capture attention and encourage active participation.**

**To address this, the provider implemented a new approach using interactive techniques, real-life examples, and modern technology to make safety briefings more engaging and effective across all locations.**

#### Interactive Techniques and Audience Involvement

To engage care home staff, the provider introduced interactive briefings that encouraged direct involvement. Rather than using long, one-way presentations, they adopted:

- **Short, scenario-based discussions** where care staff could address everyday challenges such as safe patient handling, infection control, or dealing with aggressive behavior. Employees were invited to share their experiences and propose solutions in brief group sessions.
- **Hands-on demonstrations** of safe practices, like lifting techniques or the correct use of PPE, were conducted by senior care workers, ensuring that staff could practice these skills in real time.
- **Role-playing exercises** were introduced to simulate emergency situations, such as fire drills or handling patient falls, allowing employees to practice responses in a controlled setting.

These methods fostered a collaborative learning environment, making it easier for staff to absorb safety messages while addressing real-life challenges they encountered in their daily work.

#### Using Real-Life Examples to Drive the Point Home

The provider integrated real-life incident stories during safety briefings, making the content more relatable. For example, they shared cases from other care homes where failing to follow proper infection control measures led to outbreaks. These examples highlighted the

direct impact of neglecting safety protocols, making the message personal and urgent for care workers.

#### Leveraging Technology in Safety Briefings

Given the multiple locations and differing schedules of care staff, the provider introduced digital tools to streamline safety briefings:

**Video briefings** were created, allowing staff to access important safety updates on their own time. These videos covered topics such as medication handling, fall prevention, and fire safety, ensuring that all employees received the same standardized information.

**Interactive online quizzes** were used to reinforce key safety knowledge. Care staff could complete these quick assessments on their phones or computers, allowing for real-time feedback and tracking of understanding.

The provider also developed a **centralised digital platform** where employees could access safety guidelines, training videos, and incident reports, helping to create a culture of continuous learning across locations.

#### Outcomes

By adopting these interactive methods and leveraging technology, the care home provider successfully enhanced the effectiveness of their safety briefings. Employees across multiple locations became more engaged, demonstrated a deeper understanding of key safety protocols, and participated actively in briefings. This led to increased compliance with safety standards, a reduction in workplace incidents, and a more safety-conscious culture across all care homes.

This case study shows how busy care home providers can implement dynamic, interactive safety briefings that engage staff, improve retention of safety practices, and create a safer environment for both employees and residents.



**A secondary school with a tight budget was struggling to keep staff and students engaged during safety briefings. The briefings were necessary but often felt repetitive and uninteresting, leading to limited retention of important safety protocols.**

**To overcome these challenges, the school implemented a low-cost, highly engaging approach, using interactive methods, real-life examples, and simple technology.**

#### Interactive Techniques and Audience Involvement

The school switched from traditional presentations to interactive discussions that involved both staff and students.

These brief sessions were designed to encourage participation:

- **Scenario-based discussions** became a core part of the briefings. Teachers and students discussed everyday school risks, such as fire drills, emergency evacuations, and handling lab equipment safely.
- **Hands-on demonstrations** were conducted for key safety practices like first aid and proper response during emergencies. By practicing these skills, both staff and students became more confident in their ability to act safely.

#### Using Real-Life Examples to Drive the Point Home

The school incorporated real-life stories of incidents that occurred in similar environments, such as minor accidents during sports activities or improper use of chemicals in the science lab. Sharing these stories helped make the safety lessons more relevant and tangible for the audience, making it clear why these protocols are essential.

#### Leveraging Technology in Safety Briefings

With a limited budget, the school utilised free or low-cost digital tools to enhance the briefings:

**Short video clips** about school safety, which were easily accessible online, were shown during briefings to reinforce key safety messages.

The school even involved the media studies students in the briefing process; exploring themes around narrative, audiences and production skills as part of a curriculum project.

**Online quizzes** were created using free quiz platforms, allowing both staff and students to quickly test their knowledge on fire safety, health protocols, and emergency procedures. These quizzes provided instant feedback and helped track understanding.

#### Outcomes

By adapting these budget-friendly methods, the school saw an immediate increase in engagement during safety briefings. Staff and students were more attentive, participated actively, and retained critical safety information better. This led to a stronger understanding of safety procedures and a noticeable improvement in compliance during drills and daily activities.

This case study highlights how a secondary school, even with limited resources, can create engaging and effective safety briefings using interactive techniques, real-life examples, and accessible



**A busy marina, managing boats, heavy equipment, and multiple hazards, struggled with traditional safety briefings. Employees were often distracted or disengaged during these routine talks. To improve safety awareness and reduce incidents, the marina adopted new strategies using interactive techniques, real-life examples, and technology that made sense for their fast-paced, demanding environment.**

#### Interactive Techniques and Audience Involvement

The marina moved away from static presentations and implemented interactive, hands-on safety briefings. Employees were encouraged to participate through:

Scenario-based discussions focusing on everyday risks like slips on wet surfaces, proper boat docking, or emergency responses during severe weather. These discussions helped staff actively problem-solve and consider how to respond to hazards in real time. Practical demonstrations, such as safe use of equipment for boat maintenance or correct procedures for life jacket usage, allowed employees to practice and reinforce safe behavior.

#### Using Real-Life Examples to Drive the Point Home

The marina shared real-life incident stories from within the industry, such as accidents involving improper use of safety gear or mishandling fuel on the docks. These examples helped employees relate safety protocols to tangible consequences, making safety lessons more memorable and relevant.

#### Leveraging Technology in Safety Briefings

To streamline briefings and keep employees engaged, the marina used technology in simple, cost-effective ways:

**Short safety videos** about proper docking procedures or emergency evacuations were shown before shifts to highlight critical safety points.

**Digital quizzes** on smartphones allowed staff to quickly test their knowledge on key safety topics, such as handling hazardous materials or responding to accidents. These quizzes helped ensure that everyone understood the procedures without taking too much time from their workday.

#### Outcomes

With these adapted strategies, the marina saw a significant improvement in employee engagement and safety awareness. Employees were more attentive, actively participated in safety discussions, and retained critical safety information better. As a result, workplace incidents decreased, and there was a noticeable improvement in compliance with safety regulations.

This case study demonstrates how a busy marina can enhance safety briefings through interactive methods, real-life examples, and accessible technology, making safety a priority while maintaining operational efficiency.

**CARLIN The right solution for health and safety consultancy services.**

**01794 330925**

**G4 The Mill House, Mill Road  
Totton, Southampton  
Hampshire SO40 3AE**

**Office Hours**

Monday - Friday 09:00 – 17:00

Saturday and Sunday Closed

**info@carlinltd.co.uk**

**www.carlinltd.co.uk**

**About this Document**

In preparing this document we have taken all care to ensure there are no errors or discrepancies in the information contained. In the event that errors are found, or the document is not up to the standard you expect from us, or you require additional copies; please contact the author, or forward details to Carlin Limited at the contact details on the back cover.

Copyright © 2024 Carlin Ltd - All Rights Reserved.



**If you are looking to develop and inspire a group of employees, our creative in-company training services enable you to have a programme developed in partnership with you to deliver the solution that suits your culture, learning style and needs of your people.**

**For details of in-company training and developing tailored courses please call us on 01794 330925**