

## Trainer Guide – Community Liaison Toolbox Talk

### Purpose of the Video

The purpose of this community liaison toolbox talk is to provide your staff and colleagues with a resource that gives you some guidance on how best to deal with the community when you engage with them. It serves the following main purposes:

- **How you should engage with the general public when working on construction projects;**
- **What to do if a member of the public becomes angry or confrontational; and**
- **What not to do when engaging with the general public.**

### Introducing the Video

The video has been designed as a stand-alone resource which can be either viewed by operatives during a break, or in a more formalised classroom setting if desired. It should take around 20 minutes to view the module and then have a group discussion around the key points it raises.

If you are using the toolbox talk in a classroom setting, then it may be beneficial to get the group to consider the following questions:

- **What difficult situations have they had to face with the general public;**
- **What has worked well on previous projects; and**
- **Are there any common problems or situations when engaging with the public which we can learn from?**

### Key Messages

Once the video has been viewed use discussion and response to take the group through the following key messages.

**Key Message 1:** *what are the two key principles to abide by when engaging with the general public. Which are simply, treat everyone fairly and treat everyone with respect.*

These basic principles need to be applied during any contact with the general public to ensure that any contact you have is as friendly as possible.

**Key Message 2:** *what to do if you need to deal with an angry or confrontational person. The key thing to remember is avoiding getting angry yourself, avoiding making jokes and avoiding the use of inappropriate language that might inflame the situation.*

Being able to deal with someone who is angry or frustrated is an essential skill to master. Dealing with people in the right way will be highly beneficial both in terms of allowing projects to run more smoothly and to help build better relationships with the communities that you work in. In addition, if we can all get better at this it will help us all to build a better public perception of the construction sector

### Next Steps...

Once the toolbox talk has been completed the viewers should understand what the key issues associated with community liaison are, and most importantly, how they might be able to have more positive engagements with the general public in the future.

## Frequently Asked Questions

During the discussions you might expect questions such as the following

- **Q:** *What are the most important things to remember when dealing with the general public?*

**A:** *The most important things to remember when dealing with the general public are to treat everyone fairly and to treat everyone with respect. Depending on the interaction you have it may also be beneficial to acknowledge the person's point of view or concern and then to provide accurate information about what the work is.*

- **Q:** *What things should you avoid when talking to the general public when they have a grievance with construction?*

**A:** *If you find yourself dealing with a member of the public who is angry it will be useful for you to not: get angry, make jokes, or use words which might inflame the situation.*

- **Q:** *What should you do are affected by a conflict with a member of the public?*

**A:** *It's important to remember that any anger is not personal, it simply reflects the situation that the member of public finds themselves in. After any difficult situation talk to your colleagues and supervisor to tell them what happened – it's best to resolve any negative feelings you have before you go home so they don't build up and cause stress to you and people around you.*

