



**MCA**  
DETROIT

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## TOOLBOX TALK: STRESS

**Duration:** 10–12 minutes

### 1. Why We Talk About Stress on the Job

Stress is part of life—but when it becomes overwhelming and constant, it affects:

- Focus
- Judgment
- Patience
- Safety

We work in a high-risk environment where mental distractions can be just as dangerous as physical ones.

### 2. What Is Stress?

Stress is the body's response to pressure—whether from work, finances, family, health, or life events.

Short-term stress can help with focus.

Long-term stress damages both **mental and physical health**.

### 3. Signs of Unhealthy Stress

#### Mental

- Racing thoughts
- Trouble focusing
- Anxiety or constant worry

#### Physical

- Tight muscles
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Fatigue

#### Behavior

- Short temper
- Withdrawing
- Increased alcohol or nicotine use
- Poor sleep

### 4. How Stress Impacts Jobsite Safety

High stress increases:

- Distractions
- Poor decision making
- Risk-taking
- Accidents and near misses

A stressed mind is a **distracted mind**.

## 5. Healthy Ways to Manage Stress

- Deep breathing during breaks
- Physical activity
- Talking to someone you trust
- Getting enough rest
- Breaking large problems into smaller steps

Avoid relying on alcohol, drugs, or isolation.

## 6. Looking Out for the Crew

- Watch for behavior changes
- Encourage support without judgment
- Normalize asking for help
- Step in if someone seems overwhelmed or unsafe

## 7. Key Takeaways

- Stress is normal—chronic stress is dangerous
- It directly affects safety and performance
- Healthy coping protects both your job and your life
- Support is strength, not weakness