Toolbox Talk - Component Flagging

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v2.0 | October 13, 2026 | 5–10 minutes plus field checks

What and why

Component flagging is an approved temporary identification aid that helps people return to the intended item among similar items. A misplaced or stale marker can direct everyone to the wrong item. Establish identity before placing or relying on the aid.

Objective: Explain a marker's limited meaning and verify its identity, approved placement and removal responsibility.

When and where

When the approved task plan calls for an aid around similar items, repeat visits or interruptions. In maintenance, stores, laboratories and other workplaces using an approved identification system. This is not traffic flagging.

How to use it

- Confirm the approved purpose, device, placement method and responsible person. Do not borrow required safety tags or locks as markers.
- Establish the actual item against the current instruction before the authorized person places an aid. Follow the safe placement method.
- Keep identifiers and indicators visible and equipment unobstructed. Assign handoff checks and authorized removal when the aid is no longer needed.

Verify It in the Field

Practice with paper items A12 and A21. Put a training marker on the wrong card. Ask participants to compare the instruction and permanent identifier, then hold.

For real work, use the approved safe method to check identity, placement and shared meaning. Never enter danger to inspect a marker.

Record the item, criterion, actual finding, checker and time. Confirm the owner and removal plan; verify required protection separately.

Failure points and stop triggers

Wrong item marked; conflicting meanings; hidden labels; displaced aids; identification mistaken for isolation. Hold if a marker is missing, displaced, ambiguous or obscures required information. Re-establish identity through the authorized process; never move it to a likely item.

Toolbox talk questions

1. What proves identity before we apply the aid?

2. What does the marker not prove?

3. Who controls handoff and removal?

Use the separate supervisor field check and attendance sheet. Practice is not qualification or work authorization.

Source: DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2, printed pp. 51. References and task-specific limits on the webpage.

Next step: Apply this skill to one step on the free JHA/JSA field-verification worksheet.

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/component-flagging-correct-item

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