Toolbox Talk - Benchmarking a Safety Practice

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

What and why

Benchmarking studies a practice used elsewhere and examines whether its conditions and evidence fit a local problem. Examine the practice behind another organization's good result and the conditions supporting it. Begin with a specific local problem, compare like with like and define an approved trial.

Objective: Compare one external practice with local needs and define evidence for an authorized trial before recommending adoption.

When and where

When considering an external idea, after a site visit or before adopting another team's method. Across organizations or departments through authorized exchanges and approved trials.

How to use it

- Define the local problem and current evidence. Obtain permission for any external material you use.
- Compare work, resources, exposures and requirements. Identify what makes the external practice possible and what differs here.
- Get required approval for a bounded trial, with protection, observations and stop conditions agreed beforehand.

Verify It in the Field

Compare two fictional teams using the same form but different review support. Identify why copying the form may not reproduce the result.

Confirm actual local resources and task requirements. Have responsible specialists resolve technical suitability before use.

Study agreed trial observations and required control-check results. Record what improved, what did not and the decision on further use.

Failure points and stop triggers

Copying appearance without purpose; incomparable measures; missing resource requirements; success based on anecdotes; confidential material shared without permission; a trial bypassing required protection; no follow-up after a visit. Hold adoption or the affected trial when requirements conflict, essential context is missing or protection is unverified. Stop for an unexpected hazard under the approved plan.

Toolbox talk questions

1. What local problem should this practice solve?

2. Which external condition is different here?

3. What evidence will support adoption or rejection after the trial?

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. 71–72. 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/safety-benchmarking-practice-before-adoption

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