

Work Crew Safety Guidelines

Introduction

Safety is everybody's concern and is always an important consideration at any construction site. Building construction can be one of the most dangerous occupations, and since Habitat work crews normally have a high proportion of inexperienced people, everyone must pay particular attention to safety. Try to be conscious of the safety of others as well as yourself. An observer can often see danger better than the worker involved in the project. Be cautious at all times and ask questions. Do not attempt a task if you are uncertain how it is done, or if you are unable to do it.

Safety is based on knowledge, skill and an attitude of care and concern. Supervisors should instruct each worker about the correct and proper procedures for performing each task. This should familiarize the worker with the potential hazards of doing the tasks and advise him or her as to how such hazards can be minimized or eliminated. It is very important that we at Habitat know about safe work practices and follow them.

Do not conduct a work task unless you feel certain that you can conduct the task safely and have been provided with all necessary safety equipment. Inform your supervisor if you have any safety concern or reservations about an assigned work task.

Guidelines for a safe attitude

- 1) THINK before you do your work task.
- 2) If you are uncertain about how to do a task or how to operate a power tool - ASK A SUPERVISOR.
- 3) Concentrate on your work task and eliminate distractions.
- 4) Know where the first-aid kit is located and how to get emergency help.
- 5) Inspect all power tools, hand tools, and ladders prior to use.
- 6) Advise your supervisor IMMEDIATELY of any unsafe or hazardous tool or condition.

Proper safety equipment

Proper clothing is as essential to safety as the proper selection and use of tools. You are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate for the work and weather conditions. Loose clothing (i.e., long sleeves, shirt tails, necklaces, jewelry, etc.) is dangerous around power tools with rotating components.

- **"Substantial footwear"** (i.e., work boots or thick-soled shoes) must be worn by workers at all times when on a construction site. Any worker wearing sandals or other types of inappropriate footwear will not be permitted to remain at a construction site.
- **Safety glasses** will be available for every construction worker. A worker must wear protective eyewear any time he or she is creating or working near an eye hazard such as the operation of power tools, nailing hard materials such as siding, breaking up concrete, handling of loose materials such as insulation or when instructed by a supervisor.
- **Hard hats** are to be worn while doing demolition work, during the framing phase of construction, whenever working below others or when required by a supervisor, and will be made available to workers on each job site at all times.
- **Hearing Protection** must be worn when using a high noise generating power tool for a prolonged period of time or when instructed by a supervisor. Hearing protection will be provided to any worker on the construction work site that desires them.
- **Dust mask** must be worn by each worker when installing insulation, sanding or when instructed by a supervisor. Dust masks will be provided.

- **Work Gloves** may be worn as desired to protect hands from such things as blisters, wood splinters or cold. Some work gloves are available, but workers are encouraged to bring their own to ensure proper fitting.

Power tools and other electrical equipment

A power tool should not be used without proper instruction on its operation and on what can happen if the tool is not used properly. Instruction will be provided by a qualified supervisor and will be provided to all workers, even experienced do-it-yourselfers. Workers will use the power tool in the presence of the supervisor, until the supervisor is satisfied that the worker knows how to use the power tool properly.

Never lower or carry a power tool by its cord. Power tools should be checked before each use for defective switches, cords, plugs and proper grounding. Do not operate a power tool if the manufacturer installed safety guards are missing or non-functional. Defective tools should either be reported to the supervisor immediately or labeled and brought to the construction trailer for repair. (Do not wait until the end of the day.)

To avoid electrical shock, the following rules must be obeyed:

- 1) A three-pronged plug must be used on all electric power tools or the tool must be double insulated.
- 2) Extension cords must not have frayed insulation or be fastened with staples, hung from nails or suspended from wires.
- 3) Ensure electrical extension cords are not sitting in water.

A special word on power saws:

- 1) Wearing of safety glasses is mandatory during all power saw use.
- 2) Use caution to avoid binding the blade of any saw. When cutting long panels, the blade may bind, and the saw will catch and kick back toward the operator. Use small wood wedges or shim shingles to spread the saw cut as you go along.
- 3) Maintain the blade guard. A spring-actuated blade guard often can become stretched so the return is slow. Repair any damage to the guard as soon as it happens, and NEVER tie the guard back out of the way.
- 4) Always properly support what you are working on. Never attempt to cut something that could tilt or fall and cause the saw to slip. Make sure that there are no nails in the saw path and that there are no damaging objects below the piece being cut.

Hand tools

Always select the correct type and size of tool for your work task and be sure it is in sound condition, sharp and properly adjusted as appropriate. Do not use any tool if the handle is loose or in poor condition. Dull tools are hazardous to use because excessive force must be used to make them cut. Oil or dirt on a tool may cause it to slip and cause an injury.

When using tools, handle and carry them with care. Most edged tools should be held in both hands with the cutting action away from you. Avoid using your hand or fingers as a guide to start a cut. Keep edged and pointed tools turned downward. Carry only a few tools at one time unless they are mounted in a special holder or carried in a tool belt. Do not carry sharp tools in your pockets.

Anyone working with a hammer at a height should wear a hammer loop or tool belt, and when not in use, the hammer should be kept in the loop or belt and not placed on a sloping surface or in a precarious position, such as the top platform step of a ladder.

When holding stakes, pegs or other similar items for someone using a sledge or hammer to drive them, hold with pliers or other such devices.

Avoid driving (hammering) metal stakes or tools with mushroomed heads. Set them aside for maintenance.

When finished with tools use, return them to their storage location in the construction trailer.

Ladders

Inspect a ladder before you use it. Look for wear and tear, loose rungs and defects. If the ladder appears unsafe, don't use it. Take it out of service and mark it for repair or disposal.

Use a ladder that is appropriate for the work task being conducted. Place your ladder on solid footing. If there is a danger of the ladder moving while you work, tie it down. If there is a danger that the ladder will be hit, barricade it. If the feet of the ladder are not level, dig the ground out under one foot with the claw of a hammer rather than shimming one foot with blocks. Move your ladder with your work. If both of your shoulders or your belt buckle is not between the ladder rails while you are working, you are reaching too far and the ladder requires adjustment.

An extension ladder should reach three feet above the work level. When using an extension ladder, use the "4-to-1" rule: For every four feet of height, the bottom of the ladder should be one foot away from the wall. A ladder is pitched at the proper, safe angle if you can grasp a rung at shoulder height.

Step ladders should not be used as straight ladders and do not stand on the top two steps.

Never use an aluminum ladder in the vicinity of electrical lines and never use a ladder outdoors during inclement weather or on very windy days.

Carry tools and materials in proper carrying devices and keep your hands free for climbing. When climbing, always face the ladder and use both hands.

Scaffolding

A scaffold is designed to support four times the weight of the workers and the materials resting on it. All scaffolding that is elevated 10 feet or more will be equipped with a safety railing. When erecting scaffolding, adequate sills must be provided for the scaffold posts and use base plates. Use adjusting screws, not blocks, when on an uneven grade. Make sure to plumb and level scaffolding and do not force end braces when constructing the scaffolding. A work site supervisor will inspect all scaffolding each day before use.

Excavations

Holes or trenches over 4 foot deep must be shored or sloped to prevent anyone in the hole/trench being trapped. When working in any excavation, keep your shoulders above the opening or slope the hole. Mark or barricade any excavation to warn others of the hazard. Consider access by the public when marking excavations.

Clean work site

A clean work place is a safe work place. This refers to the neatness and good order of the construction site. Helping to maintain good housekeeping contributes to the efficiency of the worker and is important in preventing accidents.

Building materials and supplies should be stored in carefully laid out piles to allow adequate aisles and walkways. All rubbish and scrap materials (i.e., blocks of wood, nails, bolts, empty cans, pipe, wire or other materials) will be cleaned up as you work and again at the end of the work day so that they do not accumulate on the work site and interfere with work and constitute a safety hazard to you or your fellow workers.

Always remove nails and screws from used lumber as it is removed. Don't just pound over protruding nails as they might still catch on clothing and footwear.

Tools and equipment that are not being used should be returned to their storage location in the construction trailer. This protects the tools and the workers.

Emergency medical care

If you or someone you observe is injured on the job, contact the HFH site supervisor immediately and summon any needed medical help. You also should use the supplies located in the first-aid kit located in the construction trailer to stabilize the injury as much as possible until medical help arrives. Your supervisor will help any injured worker.

Age Restrictions on the HFH Construction Work Site

In recognition of federal labor laws regarding children and the potential risk to children's safety on a construction site, volunteers **under the age of 16 are not allowed on a construction site while construction is going on.** Federal regulations specifically prohibit children ages 14 and 15 from working in general construction; however, they may engage in limited activities such as clearing lots, landscaping or painting as long as they are conducted on days when there is no active construction going on at the site.

Further, while volunteers **under the age of 18** (i.e., 16 & 17 year olds) may perform general construction work, they **will not be allowed** to do any ultra-hazardous activities, including the following:

- Use of power tools
- Use of motor vehicles
- Demolition
- Roofing
- Working from a height of six feet or more
- Excavation operations.

All volunteers under the age of 18 will be required to have a waiver of liability signed by a parent or legal guardian and on file with the Affiliate Volunteer Coordinator.

Please initial on Application page 1 to indicate you have read and understand all safety requirements outlined in this 2-page Tri-County Partners Habitat for Humanity Work Crew Safety Guidelines document. ***Keep this page for your reference.***

Parent / Guardian must initial and sign on Application page 3 for all volunteers under the age of 18. ***Keep this page for your reference.***