

Construction Safety Overview

Safety is everyone's concern and is always an important consideration on any construction site. Building construction can be one of the most dangerous occupations. Since Habitat work crews normally have a high proportion of inexperienced people, everyone must pay particular attention to safety. Be conscious of the safety of others, as well as yourself. Do not go ahead with a task if you are uncertain how it is done, unable to do it, or uncomfortable from a safety standpoint. Safety is based on knowledge, skill, and an attitude of care and concern. Supervisors should instruct each worker about the correct and proper procedure for performing each task in a safe manner.

Proper Safety Equipment

1. Proper clothing is essential to safety. Wear clothing and gloves that are appropriate for the work and weather conditions. Loose clothing is dangerous around power equipment.
2. Workers should wear boots or thick soled shoes at all times on the construction site. Sandals or other inappropriate footwear are not permitted.
3. Protective eyewear is available and must be worn when operating power equipment or in situations where objects may be thrown through the air (i.e. nailing).
4. Hard hats are available and must be worn when overhead dangers are present.
5. Dust masks are available and should be worn when working in dusty situations or around hazardous materials (i.e. insulation).
6. Ear plugs or ear muffs are available to be worn in noisy situations.

Power Tools and Other Electrical Equipment

1. Power tools should not be used without proper instruction. Youths under age 18 may not use power tools. Eye protection must be worn when operating power equipment. Safety devices, such as saw guards, must never be disabled.
2. Carefully check power tools before use to insure that they do not have defective switches, plugs, and cords and that they are in good operating condition and properly grounded.
3. Extension cords must be in good condition without frayed or exposed wires. Plugs should be three prong and in good condition. Cords should be strung so as to avoid accidental contact.
4. Nail guns should be operated only by experienced and trained personnel.
5. Extra care should be taken when using electric equipment and cords in wet conditions. Power tools and electrical equipment must be grounded and protected with GFI circuits.

Hand Tools

1. Always use the proper hand tool and technique for the job. Tools should be clean and in good condition. Hold edged tools in both hands and cut away from your body.
2. Wear a tool belt to carry hammers and other hand tools when possible. When working at a height, be careful not to let hand tools fall.

High Work - Ladders and Scaffolding

1. Inspect all ladders before use, and do not use them if you think them unsafe.
2. Use the proper ladder for the job. An extension ladder should reach 3 feet above the work area. Avoid a long reach which takes both shoulders extended outside of the ladder.
3. Turn feet of ladders so they dig into soil. If on floor or solid material, nail block so ladder won't slip. Keep your hands free when climbing a ladder. Carry tools and materials in carrying devices or hand them up.
4. When erecting scaffolding make sure that it is level and all feet are on solid footing. Use adjusting screws, not blocks, on uneven ground.
5. All scaffolding elevated 6 feet or more must be equipped with a safety railing. Store tools and materials carefully so that they will not drop.
6. Do not work on ladders, scaffolding, roofs, or other high places if you are physically unable or uncomfortable doing so.
7. When working on a roof, the HUGS guardrail system must be installed and fully planked. Extension ladders set up for access to a roof must have ladder walk-through bars installed and be set up with the top rung of the ladder even with the edge of the roof.
8. When working on a roof with a fall exposure of 6 feet or greater and no HUGS system installed, all workers must use a personal fall arrest system.

Clean and Safe Work Site

1. A clean work site is a safe place. Maintain good housekeeping and do not allow blocks of wood, nails, empty cans, and other materials to accumulate on the work site. Clean up rubbish and scrap materials on a daily basis.
2. Supervisors and crew leaders should constantly be alert for unsafe work sites and should take corrective action immediately.

Other

1. Trucks, tractors, and other vehicles may be operated by qualified personnel only.
2. Very heavy work, such as hauling concrete, should be done only by those with adequate physical strength.
3. At least one competent person should always remain above ground when someone is working in a trench more than 6 feet deep. The trench must first be approved by a supervisor.
4. The Building Supervisor will insure a competent person is conducting a monthly safety audit of the job site and for maintaining a safety log book detailing the inspections, findings, and actions taken. He will maintain a Materials Safety Data Sheet book on hazardous materials being used and will tag damaged tools and equipment as "Out of Service".
5. No trespassing and/or warning signs shall be placed on the job sites and partner families warned of the dangers to them and their children.
6. Temporary steps and handrails shall be built for all houses.

Emergency Medical Care

1. If someone is injured on the job, contact your supervisor immediately and call for medical help if needed.
2. Administer first aid or assist your supervisor who is trained in first aid. First aid supplies should always be available on the job site.
3. Supervisors should report all significant accidents or injuries to the Administrative office.