

WORK CREW SAFETY MANUAL

INTRODUCTION:

Construction work involves some risk, requires physical activity, and exposes volunteers to materials such as paint, dirt, sawdust, and dust. Habitat construction leaders are typically able to find a task for people with any level experience and ability. If your health does not allow for participation on the construction site but you would still like to support Habitat please contact the main office for other volunteer opportunities. Safety is everybody's concern and is our most important consideration. Since many in Habitat crews are inexperienced, everyone must pay particular attention to their own safety as well as those around them. An observer can often see danger better than those doing a project. Do not go ahead with a task if you are uncertain how it is done, or if you are unable to do it. Supervisors will instruct each worker about the correct and proper procedures for performing each task. This will 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.

GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE ATTITUDE:

1. THINK before you do your work or 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 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, ladders, and scaffolding before 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. Wear clothes and gloves that are appropriate for the work and weather conditions. Loose clothing is dangerous on the construction site. Wear clothing that is not valuable as it is possible clothes will get paint or dirt on them.

Close-toed shoes are required on the worksite at all times. Any person wearing open-toed shoes will not be permitted on the construction site.

Hard hats are supplied by Habitat. Hard hats are always worn during outside work and whenever required by the supervisor.

Protective glasses are supplied by Habitat and are always worn (Regular glasses or sunglasses are acceptable).

Dust mask are supplied by Habitat and are recommended when installing insulation or drywall.

Earplugs are supplied by Habitat and should be worn when using a power tool for a prolonged period of time or when instructed by a supervisor.

POWER TOOLS & ELICTRICAL EQUIPMENT:

A power tool is not to be used without proper instruction on its use and on what can happen if the tool is not used properly. The instruction will be done by a qualified person and will be given to all workers on a task; even experienced volunteers.

Defective tools are not be used and are to be immediately red-tagged for repair.

HAND TOOLS:

Always select the correct type and size of tool for the work and be sure it is sharp and properly adjusted. Guard against using 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. Avoid using hands or fingers as a guide to start a cut, but if it is necessary, use extreme caution.

Do not set tools on tops of ladders, on ledges or anywhere overhead. They may be forgotten and later, fall and injure someone.

LADDERS:

Inspect a ladder before using it. If the ladder is unsafe, don't use it. Look for wear and tear, loose rungs, and defects.

Use a ladder that will reach the work. When climbing onto a roof, the extension ladder must extend 3 feet above the work level. Move the ladder with the work. Do not lean any distance to the left or right. When using an extension ladder, use the "4-to-1" rule: For every 4 feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder 1 foot away from the wall. A ladder is pitched at the proper, safe angle if you can grasp a rung at shoulder height.

Place ladders on solid footing. If there is a danger of the ladder moving while working, 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 raise one foot with blocks.

Have 3 points of contact minimum with the ladder at all times – typically 2 feet and 1 hand.

HEAT AND COLD:

During a work day, it is important to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Even in cool weather, hard work causes perspiration. The body needs to replace lost fluid by drinking water. On hot summer days, it is especially important to drink plenty of water to prevent heat exhaustion. Drinking after feeling weak or thirsty is less effective and requires more time to recover.

On hot days it is important to find shade and rest periodically during the day. Make a reasonable assessment of your physical abilities and take breaks accordingly.

In the winter, watch the weather forecast the day before coming to site. Dress in layers sufficient for the expected cold and potential for temperature change throughout the day. If the cold is in excess of what you can tolerate, ask the supervisor if there is a place on site where you can warm up. If the cold is beyond your tolerance, you may need to go home.

CLEAN WORKSITE:

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

Immediately remove any nails from lumber that is removed from the building. For example, temporary bracing or incorrect portions of walls that are removed during rework.

Position building materials and supplies in carefully laid out piles to allow adequate aisles and walkways. Clean up all trash and scrap materials on a daily basis. Do not permit blocks of wood, nails, bolts, empty cans, pipe, wire or other materials to accumulate on the work site. They interfere with work and can constitute a hazard. Never leave a work site unguarded unless all tools and materials have been properly secured.

POISONS & TOXIC SUBSTANCES:

The poisons and toxic substances that can be found most often on a work site are asbestos, lead oxides, solvents and animal feces. Neither asbestos nor lead are used on new construction Habitat work sites. There are small amounts of paint thinner and related on site; these are only to be used by experienced people.

MIND-ALTERING SUBSTANCES:

Habitat for Humanity does not allow any persons under the influence of mind-altering substances, such as alcohol or drugs on an active construction site at any time. If it suspected that anyone may be under the influence of these substances they may be asked to leave the construction site.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE:

If someone is injured on the job, contact your supervisor immediately and summon any needed medical help. If the injury is serious call 911. In the urban areas where Habitat builds, the 911 dispatch center should know your location. Use the supplies located in the first-aid kit to stabilize the injury as much as possible until medical help arrives. Do not move an injured person. Do not attempt more aid than that which you are qualified.

SAFETY CHECKLIST:

Safety first! Safety rules for volunteer workers:

1. Report any condition that looks unsafe.
2. Wear a hard hat and safety glasses
3. Wear ear plugs in high noise areas.
4. Make sure blade guards are in place when operating power saws.
5. Use a respirator when working in dusty atmospheres.
6. Wear gloves when handling wood or metal products.
7. Avoid stepping on electrical power cords, especially in wet locations.
8. Keep electrical power cords off the ground as much as possible.
9. Make sure that ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) is in place before plugging in electrical power cords.
10. Immediately red-tag broken or malfunctioning tools, especially those with electrical problems.
11. Do not use ladders as work platforms; use scaffolding instead.
12. Make sure that guardrails and toe boards are in place when working on scaffolding platforms more than 6 feet high.
13. If you cut yourself, report to your supervisor immediately for first aid.