

WELCOME!

We're delighted that you're planning to join us at Gloucester County Habitat for Humanity. We want you to have a rewarding experience, so we've prepared answers for a few of the questions that first-time volunteers usually ask.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?

None – or many. The important thing about Habitat for Humanity is that you are volunteering. Whether you own 7 hammers – or don't know which end of a hammer to hold – doesn't matter in the least. Regardless of your skill level, you'll likely be working with complete novices, enthusiastic amateurs, semi-professionals, and people who make their living in the trades. One of the great things about Habitat is that you'll probably leave knowing more than you started with. The professionals (who make their living in the trades) and the semi-professionals (who probably could) are happy to help you understand what is being done, and how to do it. You may show up knowing nothing, but you'll leave knowing more.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

When you join us on a Habitat for Humanity build site, we want you to have an enjoyable experience. The first step to having an enjoyable experience is to make certain that it is a safe experience – nothing spoils a day like a trip to the emergency room. Remember, these are active construction sites, and as such you need to dress accordingly.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

There are three pieces of safety equipment that we ask you to bring and wear:

Safety Glasses:

You've only got two eyes, and you need to protect them. You can get a good pair of safety glasses at home center stores (Home Depot, Lowe's, etc.) for \$5 – \$10. Consider this to be cheap insurance for your irreplaceable eyes. If you wear glasses, make certain that they are shatterproof. You can also get safety glasses that fit over your glasses.

Work Shoes:

Bring a pair of sturdy work shoes or boots. These should have a thick sole and a heavy upper. The former keeps out nails, and the latter protects your toes from dropped objects. These need not be expensive – discount shoe stores (like Payless) and “big-box” discounters (Wal-Mart and the like) have a good selection, and a serviceable pair of work shoes can be had for under \$30. Just make certain that they are comfortable, since you'll be spending a lot of time on your feet.

Examples of unacceptable footwear include sandals, “flip-flops”, slippers, and anything with an open toe. If you show up wearing these, you won't be allowed on the site – it's just too dangerous for you. Sneakers are marginally acceptable – we won't turn you away, but sneakers may exclude you from working in certain areas.

A note to the ladies – while some stores have shoes designed specifically for women, others do not. However, you can probably find a pair in the men's or boy's sections. Your size in men's shoes is generally 2 sizes lower than your woman's size.

Gloves:

Besides protecting your hands from splinters and blisters, gloves also help you to grip things more easily. Get a set with a heavy palm (typically leather, but some synthetics are also available) – they're available for \$5 - \$10 at home center stores and other places.

A last safety note – you can completely outfit yourself with safety gear for \$40 - \$50. This stuff is useful for other things besides our job sites, but even if you have no other use for it, it is cheap insurance, and costs a lot less than the emergency room. And since we hope that you'll come back often to work with us, you'll need it more than once!

OTHER CLOTHING

Wear comfortable clothing that is appropriate for a work site. Jeans, T-shirts, sweatshirts and the like are entirely appropriate; anything that you do not want to get stained or dirty is not. Long sleeves are a good idea at all times, and they are critical if you are installing insulation (that stuff is itchy). A hat, such as a ball cap, is also a good idea - it keeps your head warm in the winter and the sun off in the summer.

WHAT TOOLS DO I NEED TO BRING?

It is entirely up to you. Tools will be supplied at the job site; however, some of the more experienced volunteers prefer to bring their own tools. If you decide to bring your own tools, mark them with your name or initials. Please note that you bring your tools at your own risk.

One rule about tools – if you didn't bring it with you, don't leave with it!