

# WORK SAFETY GUIDELINES

## INTRODUCTION

Construction sites can be extremely dangerous. Safety is everyone's concern and is always an important consideration at any construction site. Everyone must pay particular attention to safety. Be aware of the safety of others as well as your own. An observer can often see danger better than the person involved in the project. Be cautious at all times and ask questions. Do not proceed with a task if you are uncertain as to 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 volunteer on the correct and proper procedures for performing a task. Also, volunteers should be made aware of the potential hazards and how hazards can be avoided.

## CONSTRUCTION SITE POLICIES

**Age Limit** - No children under 16 years old are allowed on HfH of Seattle/South King County construction sites during construction hours. This also includes children of the HfH family for whom the house is being built.

**Sign-In** - When you arrive at the work site, please sign in and report to the Site Supervisor to receive an assignment and instructions.

**Habitat for Humanity Seattle/South King County construction sites are smoke free and alcohol free environments.**

## GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE ATTITUDE

- Think before you perform your work or task.
- If you are uncertain how to perform a task or how to operate a power tool, ask a Site Supervisor.
- Concentrate on your task and eliminate distractions.
- Know the location of the First Aid kit and how to get emergency help.
- Inspect all power tools, hand tools, ladders and scaffolding on a daily basis.
- Advise your Site Supervisor immediately of unsafe conditions or hazards.

## 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 can be dangerous when using power tools.

**Volunteers** should wear **substantial footwear** at all times when on a construction site. No sandals, flip flops, or high heels.

**Hard hats** are to be worn on job sites at all times.

**Protective glasses** will be available to volunteers when required. A volunteer must wear protective glasses any time he/she is operating a power tool or otherwise instructed by a supervisor.

Each volunteer must wear a **dust mask** when installing insulation, sanding or when instructed by a supervisor. **Ear plugs** must be worn when using a power tool for a prolonged period of time or when instructed by a supervisor.

**Hard hats, protective glasses, dust masks and ear plugs are available on construction sites.**

### **POWER TOOLS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT**

A supervisor will instruct volunteers on the proper use of power tools. The volunteer will use the power tool in the presence of the supervisor until otherwise instructed.

- Never lower or carry a power tool by its cord.
- Clean tools daily. Power tools should be checked for defective switches, cords, plugs and proper grounding. Defective tools should not be used and should be reported to the supervisor **or** labeled and promptly brought to the tool room for repair.

**To avoid electrical shock the following rules should be followed:**

- Electric power tools should have a three-pronged plug.
- Extension cords should not have frayed insulation, be fastened with staples, hung from nails or suspended from wires.
- All temporary lights must be equipped with non-conductive guards.

### **HAND TOOLS**

- Always select the correct type and size of tool for your work. Also, be sure the tool 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. Oil or dirt on a tool may cause it to slip and cause an injury.
- When using tools, hold them correctly. Most edge 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.

### **HANDLE AND CARRY TOOLS WITH CARE.**

- Keep edged and pointed tools turned downward.
- Carry only a few tools at a time unless they are mounted in a special holder or carried in a tool belt.
- Everyone working with a hammer should wear a hammer loop or tool belt. When not in use, the hammer should be kept in the loop or belt.
- Do not carry sharp tools in your pockets. When not in use tools should be kept in special boxes, chests or cabinets.

### **SAWS**

- Don't bend the blade of any saw. When cutting long panels, the blade may bend and the saw mill may catch and kick back towards the operator. Use small wood wedges or shim shingles to spread the saw cut as you go.
- Keep the blade guard working. A spring blade guard can often become bent and won't slide quickly, or the spring 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.
- Properly support what you are working on. Never attempt to cut something that could tilt or fall and cause the saw to slip.

### **LADDERS**

- Inspect a ladder before you use it. If the ladder is unsafe, don't use it. Look for wear and tear, loose rungs and other defects.
- **Use a ladder that will reach the work.** An extension ladder should reach three feet above the work level. If both of your shoulders are extended outside the ladder width while you are working you are reaching too far. When using an extension ladder use the four to one rule: for every four feet of height move the bottom of the ladder one foot away from the wall.
- 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.

- Never use an aluminum ladder in the vicinity of electrical lines or while doing electrical work. Never use a ladder outdoors during inclement weather or on windy days.
- Carry tools and materials in proper carrying devices. Keep your hands free for support. When climbing up a ladder always face the ladder.
- Step Ladders: Never stand on top or next to top rung of a step ladder. Check that all four legs are on solid footing and that the latch is in place.

## **SCAFFOLDING**

All scaffolding that is elevated 4 feet or more must be equipped with a safety railing. A scaffold must be designed to support four times the weight of a person and the materials resting on it. Scaffolding components that are not designed to be compatible should not be mixed.

Inspect all scaffolding each day before using it. Never use damaged or defective equipment. Avoid rusted parts as their strength is unknown. When erecting scaffolding, provide adequate sills for the scaffold posts, and use base plates. Use adjusting screws and not blocks when on an uneven grade. Make sure you plumb and level scaffolding, and do not force end braces when constructing the scaffolding.

Many scaffolding accidents are caused by defective planking. Use only properly graded and inspected lumber for planking. Inspect planking daily for splits and knots and remove defective or damaged planking.

## **CLEAN WORK SITE**

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

- Place building materials and supplies in an orderly manner to allow adequate aisles and walkways.
- Clean up all rubbish 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 may constitute a hazard.
- Keep tools and equipment that are not being used in chests, panels or tool boxes. Never leave a work site unless all tools and materials have been properly secured.

## **POISONS AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES**

Poisons and toxic substances that are most often found on a work site are asbestos, lead oxides, animal feces and solvents. Special care should be taken when you come in contact with any of these substances or any unfamiliar substance.

**If you discover asbestos fiber being used as pipe, boiler or heating duct insulation, contact your supervisor immediately. Do not attempt to remove the asbestos fiber on your own.**

Scraping exterior wood work, demolishing lead painted walls and stripping old mill work are the principal ways that volunteers can be exposed to lead chips, dust and particles. Contact your supervisor **immediately** if you discover any lead painted surfaces. **Masks are the best protection** against breathing in harmful particles.