

Safety Instructions for Work Site Volunteers

Please read this form and sign on the following page.

1. FOREWARD:

- Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity exists to provide safe, decent, affordable housing to families.
- In pursuit of this goal, we are also committed to provide a safe and healthful working environment for all workers on our job sites.
- Our guidelines for achieving a safe and healthful workplace are standards published under the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act of 1973, specifically Chapter 296-155 WAC, Safety Standards for Construction Work and Chapter 296-24 WAC, General Safety and Health Standards
- Under those standards, Habitat for Humanity as represented by the Construction Superintendent has the legal responsibility to establish, supervise and enforce a safe and healthful working environment, an accident prevention program and training programs which improve the skill and competency of workers in workplace safety and health.
- Paragraph 296-155-105 spells out **each worker's** legal responsibilities. Please ensure you're familiar and comply with the following: coordinate and cooperate with all other workers to eliminate accidents, study and observe all safety rules governing the work to be performed, use proper safety devices and personal protective equipment, and **immediately report any work-related injury or illness to the Construction Manager.**

2. INTRODUCTION:

- Building construction is a high-hazard occupation. The type of work being done, the tools used, and the nature of the job site all combine to produce well-above average rates of injury and disability among construction workers. Significantly, all construction site injuries are avoidable.
- Those events we call "accidents" are results of holes we have in our knowledge, skills or attitudes. We at Habitat for Humanity can continue to enjoy an exceptionally low rate of job-site injury by helping each other develop and maintain the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

3. GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE ATTITUDE:

- Always remember, we are volunteers. Habitat is not paying anyone by the hour. We are not in a hurry. We have no reason to ever compromise safety!
- Before you begin a task, look around the worksite, think about what's going to be involved. If you are uncertain about how to do a task or how to use one of the hand or power tools, ask the construction superintendent.
- Ensure the area in which you are going to work does not present any safety hazards such as piles of materials, uneven footings for ladders or scaffolding, or other things that could fall on your head.
- Inspect all power cords and tools, hand tools, ladders, and scaffolding.
- Be a conscious observer of other people's safety as well. A worker involved in a task very often overlooks hazards that are obvious to an observer.
- Never be embarrassed to ask a question.
- If you think someone may be unsafe, report it to your team leader or to the construction superintendent. Don't be afraid to be thought of as overcautious – that's never been a problem.

4. GENERAL SAFETY POLICIES:

- Safety Orientation – Prior to working on any construction project for Habitat for Humanity, everyone must have read the contents of this booklet and signed and turned in the acknowledgement form on the last page.
- Sign-in Sheet – Industrial insurance requires that each person working on site enter their name, time begun and time ended on the sign-in sheet each day that they work. The sign-in sheet will be located on a clipboard at the safety bulletin board.
- Proper Clothing is as essential to safety as the proper selection and use of tools. Proper clothing will protect you against scratches, abrasions, slivers, sunburn and similar hazards. Shorts are not acceptable – long pants must be worn. Short-sleeved shirts are acceptable but shirts must be worn. Loose or ragged clothing is particularly dangerous around power tools and when working on ladders.
- Footwear – There are a number of hazards to feet. There are almost always nails scattered around the site. In addition, there are many uneven surfaces that can cause twisted or sprained ankles. Therefore, you must wear substantial footwear – shoes made from leather or other equally firm material. Athletic shoes are not acceptable, unless working on a roof.
- Hardhats are mandatory whenever there is a possibility of flying or falling objects. For example, anytime you are working near the eaves of a house and people are working on the roof above you. Habitat will always have hard hats available on site for you to wear.
- Eye Protection will be worn while operating a power tool, when hammering, or at any time the construction manager directs you to. "Ricochets" are very common when people hammer nails. If you or anyone around you is pounding nails, you should wear eye protection.
- Ear protection should be worn when operating power saws or at any other time a high noise level is being generated. You will find a supply of earplugs near the safety bulletin board.
- Dust masks should be worn when sanding wood or sheetrock seams or when spray painting. You should also try to get as much ventilation as practical when sanding or spray painting.
- Lifting - More than all other causes put together, lifting causes the greatest number of workplace injuries. The simple habit of keeping your back as straight as possible (avoid bending at the waist), while making your legs do most of the work in lifting.

This will reduce the strain on your lower back by as much as 75%. It's also very important to have the weight being lifted as close to your body as practical.

- A volunteer may not work alone at the work site without an authorization form from the construction superintendent.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a form signed by one of their parents, authorizing the affiliate to obtain emergency medical treatment for the minor if it becomes necessary.
- The presence of youth under the age of 16 is not permitted at the worksite. Youth 16 and 17 must be attended by a parent or a designated adult individual and must have the permission of the construction manager. If coming out as a group, for every five youth there must be one adult 21 or older.
- If the worksite is not deemed a construction site, youth ages 14 and 15 are able to volunteer on the worksite. The worksite is *only* deemed a non-construction site when there are no power tools, ladders or scaffolding on site.
- In the event of any emergency (fire, for example), ensure your co-workers are alerted and then evacuate the site to a safe distance. Help the construction superintendent account for all the workers. Ensure that responding emergency vehicles and personnel will have unrestricted access by moving your own vehicle if necessary.

5. EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE:

- Any injuries no matter how seemingly minor must be reported to the construction superintendent and must be treated as soon as possible.
- For minor injuries, a first aid kit is kept on the site, next to the safety bulletin board.
- For anything more serious, emergency medical help shall be called immediately or the worker should be taken to the nearest Emergency Room of the nearest medical facility.
- An injury of any degree should be reported immediately to the construction superintendent or team leader.
- An incident form must be completed by the worker and the construction superintendent for any incident or accident, even if the event is minor. This helps Habitat see what the most common sources of injury at the job site and to take measures to prevent them in the future.

6. HOUSEKEEPING:

- A clean, well-arranged work site is a much safer place to work. Since we are all unpaid volunteers, there is no reason why we can't take the time to keep our workplace a safe one.
- Keep hallways, aisles and walkways clear.
- Put all scrap materials and rubbish either on out-of-the-way scrap piles or in appropriate containers.
- When you pull off a board with nails in it, take the time to either pull the nails out or bend them over.
- Keep tools and equipment that is not being used in toolboxes or in the storage shed. This protects both the tools and the workers.
- Any holes in the floor or other walking surfaces must be guarded to keep people from tripping on them or falling into them.
- Where electrical cords and water hoses cross aisles or doorways, they should be either covered or suspended.

7. POWER TOOLS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:

- **Never use a power tool that you haven't been trained to use.**
- All power tools must be in good, safe, working condition. They should be checked daily for defective switches, cords, plugs and proper grounding.
- In order to prevent electrical shock, the following rules must be observed: 1) Electrical cords that are worn, frayed or cut shall not be used. 2) Extension cords shall not be hung from nails or suspended by metal wire. 3) Power tools used in a wet environment must be protected by a GFI (ground fault interrupter) plug or circuit. 4) A three-pronged plug must be used with all power tools. 5) All temporary lights must have non-conductive guards.
- A tool should not be used without permission from its owner. Owners must be responsible for the condition of their own power tools, and not loan them to people who aren't competent in their use.
- Never raise, lower, or carry a power tool by its cord.

8. A SPECIAL WORD ON SAWS:

- On any kind of power saw, make sure the guard is in place and fully operational. Open it by hand and then ensure it springs back into position by itself. Be aware that the spring in spring-actuated guards can stretch and wear so the return is slow. These are no longer safe.
- Always keep your hands and fingers well away from the blade of a saw.
- Unplug saws to carry them, change blades, or make depth-of-cut adjustments.
- Do not try to cut small pieces of wood on a circular saw or chop saw. It is just too dangerous!
- Let the blade get up to speed before moving it up to come in contact with the wood. Do not hold it against the wood then, start it. It jams and tries to jerk out of your hand.
- **If anything gets jammed in a saw, unplug the saw before trying to clear the jam!**
- When using a circular saw, set the depth of cut so you only have the necessary amount of blade exposed. It shouldn't extend more than one-eighths of an inch beyond the wood being cut.
- When cutting long panels, the blade can grind and cause a very dangerous kickback. Small wood wedges or shims can spread and maintain the saw cut as you go along.
- Always have the material and saw on a firm surface. Never try to cut something that could tilt or fall and cause the saw to slip. Never use your leg as a sawhorse.
- Trying to "steer" a circular saw can cause it to kickback. That's really unsafe!

9. HAND TOOLS:

- Select the right kind and the right size tool for the job. Don't use a dull tool for a cutting job. Dull tools are hazardous because they require excessive force to make them cut, this means they slip more often. Do not use a tool with a loose handle or other defect.
- Handle and carry tools with care. Carry only a few tools at a time; use a toolbox, other container or tool belt.
- Do not carry edged or pointed tools in your pocket.
- Stand tools up such as shovels, and rakes when not using them, or lay them with point or tines down.

10. EXTENSION LADDERS:

- Always inspect a ladder before using it. The adjustable footpads should swivel freely and not be jammed with dirt or mud.
- Do not select an aluminum ladder if you are going to be working near electrical lines.
- Ladders can be extremely hazardous when not set properly. Always have both feet of the ladder on a substantial and level base, not on moveable objects.
- The feet of the ladder shall be set so they won't slip backwards, and if the rubberized footings aren't enough to make them safe, the base may be staked down or blocked.
- Use the four-to-one rule: for every four feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder of foot away from the wall.
- Ensure the ladder is set to a sufficient height. An extension ladder should reach three feet beyond the work level. If its' being used to gain access to a roof or an upstarts floor, it should reach three feet beyond the walking surface.
- When practical, ladders should be tied at or near the top.
- Be careful when going up or down a ladder. No more than one person on a ladder at a time and you should always face the ladder when clinging or going down. Don't carry tools or materials that will interfere with the use of both your hands.

11. STEPLADDERS:

- Before using a stepladder, look it over for any defects. Remember we're not in a hurry.
- Neither the top nor the top step of a stepladder is a safe step. If you need to go higher, get a taller ladder!
- Also, the cross bracing and the foldout platform are also not meant for you to stand on.
- Do not put tools or materials on the top of a stepladder. They can fall off. Don't leave things on the platform when ladder is attended.
- When using a stepladder, make sure the legs are fully open. Never lean a stepladder against a wall to use as if it were a straight ladder.
- Always face the ladder when ascending and descending.

12. SCAFFOLDING:

- All scaffolds must be erected under the supervision of a competent and experienced person- usually the construction superintendent. This includes moving scaffolds from one position to another. Each leg of a scaffold must be supported by and adequate footing. Loose bards, bricks and other material do not provide a safe, adequate base.
- Scaffolds should be erected as close to plum and level as practicable. They should not lean perceptibly.
- Where the working platform in more than four feet off the ground, the scaffold shall have guardrails installed.
- If people are working under the scaffold, toe boards must be used to prevent tools and materials from falling on them.
- Workers are not to climb the metal tubular frame of the scaffold to get the working platform. Other, safer means of access must be used – a ladder or access from the building.

13. FALL PROTECTION:

- When there is hazard of falling form a height of ten feet or more, workers must use fall protection. (There is a hazard when the person is within six feet of the edge.)
- Unless there is an approved scaffold platform with guardrails under the roof edge, fall protection will be a body harness, which properly secured to an anchor point on the roof.
- When putting on a body harness, you should inspect the condition of the webbing, connectors and adjustments. Have a co-worker inspect if after you put it on to make sure you did it right.
- Since the insurance requirements state that each person's anchor point must support 500 pounds, only one person can be tied off to any single anchor point at a time.
- Anchor points are the metal brackets supplied in the harness kit. Tying a rope around a rafter is not a proper anchor!
- As you move from one part of the roof to another, keep adjusting the amount of slack in the restraint line to ensure there is not too much slack. Fall protection systems do not do much good if you fall more than two feet before they stop you.