

# ***Yakima Valley Partners Habitat for Humanity Work Camp Safety Guidelines***

Construction is one of the ten most dangerous occupations. Accidents can happen and can result in partial or total disability.

Safety must be the primary consideration at any construction site. Since Habitat work crews normally have a high proportion of inexperienced workers, everyone must pay particular attention to safety. Safety is based on knowledge, skill and an attentive attitude. The builder should know correct and proper procedures for performing each task and be familiar with the potential hazards.

Kidding around and horseplay are fun, but they could be very dangerous on a construction site. Save the games for after hours.

Rushing or extending yourself beyond your physical limits is exceedingly dangerous. Try to be conscious of the safety of others as well as your own. An observer can often see danger better than the worker involved. Be cautious at all times and ask questions rather than going ahead with something about which you are uncertain.

## **FIRST AID**

If you are injured in any way, tell the job supervisor immediately. We will have a First Aid kit on site and we recommend that you bring one also. Someone who knows First Aid is a good addition to your group.

Clean and bandage even slight cuts immediately. If a serious accident occurs, get professional help as soon as possible. No treatment or improper treatment can complicate the injury. It may save time to find out before you come, the date of the last tetanus shot for each person and any medication members have allergic reactions to. We also recommend that the group leader be responsible for obtaining and holding medical insurance information and parental release for treatment by a hospital (if necessary). There are clinics and or hospitals close to all of the sites and we have included maps that show where these are.

## **CLOTHING**

Wear clothing that is appropriate for the work and weather conditions. Sturdy shoes with thick soles that will protect your feet from protruding nails are recommended. Slick soled shoes, sandals, and thongs/ flip-flops ARE NOT to be worn.

Hats are particularly helpful in the hot summer months. Clothing that covers the arms and legs and/or sunscreen can prevent a serious burn. Gloves should be worn to protect your hands from excessive wear and splinters. Bring several particle masks to protect your lungs from dust, fiberglass and other air born materials. Safety glasses may be needed and the disposable kinds are inexpensive. Hard hats will be furnished when they are needed.

## **LIFTING AND CARRYING**

Improper lifting or carrying heavy objects may cause injuries such as hernias. When lifting, stand close to the load, straightening your legs and keeping your body as vertical as possible. To lower the objects reverse the motion.

When carrying a heavy load, do not turn or twist your body but make adjustments in position by shifting your feet. If the load is heavy or bulky, get help from others. Never underestimate the weight to be moved or overestimate your own ability. Always secure assistance when carrying long pieces of lumber.

## **HAND TOOLS**

There is an old saying, "Use the proper tool for the proper job." Cutting tools are designed for specific purpose just as hammers of different weights are used to drive different size nails. All hand tools perform tasks better if kept sharp, clean, and in proper working order. Hand tools should be carried on your personal tool belt or stored in a proper place, when not in use, to avoid loss of tool or injury to you and/or your co-worker. At the end of the day, be sure everything is picked up and put in its proper place.

## **POWER TOOLS**

Before operating any power tool or machine you must be thoroughly familiar with the way it works and the correct procedures to follow. In general, when you learn to use the equipment the correct way, you also learn to use it the safe way. Professionals in the building trades will instruct those who need to learn. Please ask. If you are uncomfortable with using a power tool, do not use it.

## **LADDERS AND SCAFFOLDING-FALLING OBJECTS**

Scaffolding comes in many forms. Specific instructions for setting up, tearing down and working on scaffolding will be provided by the site foreman. No one should work off of ladders, scaffolding, or on roofs if they are uncomfortable with heights. People working with this type of equipment need to pay particular attention to the use and storage of tools and materials in order to prevent injury from falling objects. Working under or near ladders, scaffolding, etc. is always a potentially dangerous situation. Clear communication with co-workers and awareness of those working around you is advised.

## **GOOD HOUSEKEEPING**

One of the simplest ways to maintain a safe work site is to keep a clean and orderly site. Building materials, tools and equipment need to be kept in predetermined locations until they are used or permanently disposed of.

Boards with nails protruding from them present a particularly hazardous situation. NEVER LEAVE THEM LYING AROUND. In addition to improving efficiency and safety, good housekeeping helps maintain a better appearance on the construction site, which in turn will contribute to the morale of all the workers and members of the neighborhood.

## **DEMOLITION**

Some of our most dangerous sites are demolition sites. Demolition, like construction must be carried out in a neat orderly fashion paying particular attention to:

1. Location of fellow workers.
2. Broken glass.
3. Nails, protruding from wood.
4. Irregular walking surfaces.
5. Dangerously suspended objects.

Extreme caution must be practiced in use of crowbars, picks, shovels, axes, etc. Protective equipment such as gloves, masks, goggles, and hard hats is of utmost importance. A continual awareness of the location and activities of any heavy equipment such as trucks backhoes, or dozers must be practiced. Continual vigilance is the price of safety.

## **SITE FOREMAN AND CREW LEADERS**

Ultimate responsibility lies in the hands of the site foreman and crew leaders. It is suggested for the sake of the safety, productivity, and quality of the volunteers building experience, as well as the building itself, that you attempt to supply your group with one professional carpenter or builder with every 5 or 6 volunteers you bring in your group.

Please go over these points with your group before you come. We have a very good record of safety on the job and we wish to keep it with your help.

There will be a meeting on safety before you start working. It will stress some of the statements in this print out and cover any specifics for the week you will be working.

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