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## **SAFETY ON THE CONSTRUCTION SITE**

Try to be conscious of the safety of others as well as yourself. An observer can often see danger better than the worker involved in the project. Be cautious at all times and ask questions. Do not go ahead with a task if you are uncertain as to how it is done, or if you are unable to do it.

### **Guidelines for a safe attitude:**

- THINK before you do your work or task.
- If you are uncertain about how to do a task, or how to operate a power tool, ask a supervisor for instructions, demonstration, and supervision.
- Concentrate on your task and eliminate distractions.
- Know where the first aid kit is located and how to get emergency help.
- Do not work alone.
- Inspect all power tools, hand tools, ladders, and scaffolding on a daily basis - make sure they are not faulty.
- Advise your supervisor immediately of any unsafe condition or hazard.

### **Proper safety equipment:**

- Wear clothes and gloves that are appropriate for the work and weather conditions.
- Workers should wear work boots at all times on a construction site. Sandals and other inappropriate footwear will not be allowed on the construction site.
- Hard hats should be worn during demolition or framing, or when required by a supervisor. Hard hats are to be made available to workers on each job site at all times.
- Protective glasses are required when operating a power tool and recommended when nailing.
- Workers must wear dust masks when installing insulation or when sanding.

### **Power tools and other electrical equipment:**

- A power tool should not be used without proper instruction on its operation.
- Trainees should use power tools in the presence of the instructor, until the instructor is satisfied that the trainee knows how to use the tool properly.
- Never lower or carry a power tool by its cord.
- Clean tools daily, checking for proper grounding and defective switches, cords, and plugs.
- Defective tools should be reported to the supervisor immediately.

### **To avoid electrical shock:**

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

### **Hand tools:**

- Select the correct type and size of tool for your work. Be sure it is sharp and properly adjusted.
- Do not use a tool if the handle is loose or in poor condition.
- Dull tools are hazardous because excessive force must be used to make them work.

- Oil or dirt on a tool can cause it to slip; keep tools clean.
- Hold hand tools correctly - ask a supervisor for help if necessary.
- Most edge tools should be held in both hands with the cutting action away from your body.
- Avoid the use of hands or fingers as a guide to start a cut. If you must, use extreme caution.
- Handle and carry tools with care. Keep edged and pointed tools turned downward. Carry only a few tools at a time. Do not carry sharp tools in your pockets.
- Anyone working with a hammer at a height should wear a hammer loop or tool belt: when not in use, the hammer should be kept in the loop or belt and not placed on a sloping surface or other precarious position.
- Tools should be stored in their designated places when not in use.

### **Special notes on saws:**

- Ask your supervisor for precise instructions on how to operate a saw, and precautions of which you need to be aware.
- Don't bind the blade of any saw. Use small wood wedges or shim shingles to spread the saw cut as you go along.
- Keep the blade guard working. A spring-actuated 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.
- Support what you are working on properly. Never attempt to cut something that could tilt or fall and cause the saw to slip.

### **Ladders:**

- Inspect a ladder before you use it. Look for wear and tear, loose rungs, and defects.
- If a ladder is unsafe, don't use it.
- Use a ladder that will reach your work. Extension ladders should reach 3 feet above the work level.
- Move your ladder with your work. If while you are working, both of your shoulders are extended outside the ladder, you are reaching too far.
- Extension ladders: for every 4 feet of height, move the base of the ladder 1 foot away from the wall.
- Place your ladder on solid footing. If there is a danger that the ladder will move while you work, tie it down. If there is a danger that the ladder will be hit, barricade it.
- Never use an aluminum ladder near electrical lines, or any types of ladder outside in bad weather.
- Carry tools and materials in proper carrying devices, keeping you hands free for climbing. When climbing, always face the ladder.

### **Scaffolding:**

- Scaffolding that is elevated 10 feet or more must have a safety railing.
- All scaffolding must have toe boards, to eliminate the possibility that tools or debris will be kicked or pushed on people below.
- Scaffolds must be designed to support 4 times the weight of the expected load of workers and tools.
- Never use damaged or defective equipment; avoid rusted parts, as their strength is unknown.
- Inspect scaffolds each day before use.
- Use only properly graded and inspected lumber for planking. Inspect planking daily for splits and knots; remove damaged or defective planking.

**Clean work site:**

- A clean work site is a safe work place.
- Place materials and supplies in neat piles to allow adequate aisles and walkways.
- Clean up all rubbish and scrap on a daily basis. Do not allow blocks of wood, nails, bolts, empty cans, etc. to accumulate on the work site, since they can be a safety hazard.
- Never leave a work site unguarded unless all tools and materials have been properly secured.

*If someone is injured on the job immediately contact your supervisor and summon any needed medical help. You should also use the supplies located in the first aid kit to stabilize the injury as much as possible until medical help arrives.*

*A waiver of liability and photo release form must be signed by all volunteers regardless of age before coming onto a job site. For insurance reasons, all volunteers must be at least 16 years of age or older. Volunteers ages 16 & 17 are restricted to framing (excluding work on trusses), painting, landscaping, and general cleanup activities. Individuals and groups must have a ratio of 1:5 adults to youth ages 16 & 17.*

*Water is provided at the work site but occasionally is in short supply; therefore, you are encouraged to provide your own. All tools are provided, but you may bring your own work gloves or hammer. Habitat will not take responsibility for anything lost or left on the job site.*

*If you have any questions or concerns before your work date, please contact:*

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**SAFETY FIRST!**