

Safety Policy

INTRODUCTION

Safety is everybody's concern and is always an important consideration at any construction site. Without proper preparation, construction can be dangerous. Since Habitat work crews normally have a high proportion of inexperienced people, everyone must pay particular attention to safety!

- 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 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 worker about the correct and proper procedures for performing each task. This should familiarize the worker with the potential hazards of doing the tasks and advise him or her as to how such hazards can be minimized or eliminated.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. More coverage is better, but do not wear flowing or very loose fitting clothing. Do not have dangling hair or jewelry. Always wear closed-toed shoes on the worksite.

It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that Habitat volunteers know about safe work practices and follow them.

GENERAL SAFETY INFORMATION

- Be aware of situations which can lead to risky or dangerous situations.
- Help maintain a clean work area. Clutter leads to accidents.
- Be sure you are wearing the necessary protective equipment including: glasses, hard hats, shoes, dust masks.
- Do not take chances.
- Report all unsafe conditions to your supervisor.
- Be particularly careful about power tools and saws.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

If someone is injured on the job, contact a member of the Habitat Staff (bright green shirts) or a Project Director (bright orange shirts). Immediately summon medical help (911) if necessary. You should also use the supplies located in the first-aid kit to stabilize the injury as much as possible until medical help arrives.

CLEAN WORKSITE

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

- Position building materials and supplies in carefully laid out piles to allow adequate aisles and walkways.
- Clean up all rubbish and scrap materials before leaving the site. Do not permit blocks of wood, nails, bolts, empty cans, pipe, wire or other materials to accumulate on the worksite.
- Keep tools and equipment that are not being used in tool boxes, sheds, of trailers. This protects the tools and the workers.
- Never leave a worksite unguarded unless all tools and materials have been properly secured.

TASK SPECIFIC SAFETY GUIDELINES

You may participate in any number of tasks on the worksite. For each task, there are specific safety considerations. Here are a few common activities and some basic safety guidelines for each:

- **Hand and Power Tools**
 - Wear safety glasses when operating power tools and nailing.
 - Use tools for their intended purpose.
 - Never hold material in your hands while cutting. Place on a firm surface.
 - Guards on saws must be in place and operating.
 - Tools should be in good condition- make sure wooden handles do not have splinters or cracks. Note whether the saw blade is sharp and free from rust.
 - Take care not to bind (obstruct) the blade of any saw. If a saw blade binds, it will kick back toward the operator.
 - Do not over-reach.
 - Select the correct tool for your work. Carry only those tools you need. Regularly inspect tools for broken or missing pieces. Inspect cords for frayed wires or damaged insulation.
 - Use grounded plugs on tools appropriately.

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- If unfamiliar with a tool's use, ask for assistance and take time to practice using the tool.
- Do not operate tools without proper training, approval, and/or supervision.
- Do not overexert yourself or the tool; this can lead to slips and strains.
- Be mindful of your body position – most hand tool injuries are the result of being struck by the tool or flying chips.
- Disconnect power source before moving the tool, making adjustments or changing bits or blades.
- Do not use the cord to lift or lower the tool.
- Do not fasten cords with staples, nails, or suspend them from wire.
- Pneumatic nail guns are not allowed for framing and roofing. They may be used to hang doors and trim.
- **Ladders**
 - Use ladders for the purposes for which they were designed. Do not use ladders for skids, braces or work benches.
 - Do not step on the top rung or platform or a step ladder.
 - Provide a stairway or ladder for any point of access where there is a break in elevation of 19-inches or more.
 - Do not use step ladders as straight ladders – always open all four feet, and lock spreaders on a step ladder and place in a level condition.
 - Do not place tools or materials on steps.
 - Use proper angles when using straight and extension ladders.
 - When using a ladder that is not self-supporting, use the “four-to-one” rule: For every four-feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder one-foot from the wall.
 - Always secure straight and extension ladders by tying off the top and/or securing the base.
 - Top extension ladders must extend and least three-feet beyond the supporting object when used as an access to an elevated work area.
 - Before climbing on ladders, make sure latches are properly engaged.
 - Extension ladders must be overlapped a minimum of three rungs.
 - Keep your body near the middle of the ladder.
 - Avoid leaning off the edge of the ladder.
 - Move the ladder frequently so as not to be tempted to lean too far.
 - Do not carry anything that will prevent holding on with both hands while ascending or descending the ladder. Use a tool belt or a tool bag to lift tools.
 - Only one person on a ladder at a time.
 - If it becomes necessary to place a ladder in- or over a doorway, barricade the door.
 - Do not use metal ladders near an electrical exposure.
- **Scaffolding**
 - Inspect all scaffolding before starting work to determine if safety features are in place and construction is sound.
 - Ensure that the footing and anchorage for scaffolds are sound. Scaffold frames should be erected level and plumb, and on a firm base.
 - Never change or remove scaffold members unless authorized. Do not alter scaffolding members or use make-shift moorings. Have a “competent person” (the project director, HFH staff) review any adjustments.
 - Know safe working loads of scaffolds and work within those limits.
 - Do not allow tools, materials, and/or debris to accumulate on scaffold.
- **Rough-in Carpentry**
 - Observe all rules and precautions specified under *General, Power Tools, and Ladders*.
 - Remove all nails from discarded lumber as soon as possible.
 - Always wear a hard hat during the framing stage. Watch for materials falling from above.
 - As a sub-floor is installed, cover stair openings with suitable materials, screwed to the sub-floor with deck screws.
 - Install a temporary 2 x 6 about 6-inches from the bottom of the first course of roof sheathing as soon as it is installed to prevent tools or personnel from sliding off the roof.
 - Install GFCI circuits in the temporary power system.
 - Install a stair, ladder or ramp to provide access for personnel to any break in elevation over 19-inches.
 - Stairways with four or more risers, or which rise more than 30-inches, must include a handrail at 36-inches high from the plane of the horizontal surface.

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- When standing up walls, make sure there are enough people to hold up the wall, and have bracing ready so it can be fastened as soon as possible.
- Make sure the wall is fully supported until the bracing is up.
- Pneumatic nail guns are not allowed during the framing process.
- **Roofing**
 - Take precautions when climbing onto or off of the roof. This is when many roof-related falls occur.
 - NEVER step backwards on a roof. Every year experienced roofers fall off roofs by stepping backwards off the edge.
 - When roofing, wear shoes with soft soles and some tread left.
 - Loose materials and sawdust should be removed frequently from the roof surfaces.
 - Do not allow personnel to work directly beneath areas being roofed.
 - Never work on a roof alone.
 - Hard hats must be worn by workers on the ground while roofing is in progress.
 - Pneumatic nail guns are not allowed during the roofing process.
- **Siding**
 - Observe all rules and precautions specified under *General, Power Tools, and Ladders*.
 - Move materials close to the work area to minimize carrying distances.
 - Remove all nails from scrap – discard properly.
 - Use proper hand tools.
- **Insulation and Drywall**
 - Observe all rules and precautions specified under *General, Power Tools, and Ladders*.
 - Utility knives are very sharp – keep your hands out of the path of the blade. Always retract the blade or uninstall a guard when not in immediate use.
 - Fiberglass particles can be particularly harmful. When handling insulation, wear sturdy, loose, long-sleeved clothing, gloves, and goggles (even glasses are inadequate protection), face mask, respirator, and a hat.
 - If particles get into your skin, do not scratch. Shower as soon as possible.
 - Drywall is very heavy. Stack drywall materials so that they are stable and secure. Do not pull a stack away from the wall, as many bones have been broken by shifting stacks.
 - Safety glasses and masks help prevent drywall dust from getting in your eyes and lungs, especially when working on the ceiling.
- **Painting, Floor and Interior Trim**
 - Observe all rules and precautions specified under *General, Power Tools, and Ladders*.
 - Ensure ladders are in good condition.
 - Maintain good housekeeping in the work area.
 - Wear appropriate respiratory protection when sanding and painting.
 - Be aware of others working in the vicinity. You don't want to miss your mark and strike someone working in the adjacent area.
 - Place ladders on solid footing and don't leave any tools or paint on top of the ladders.
 - Don't cross hands to stabilize material when using a miter saw. Have someone else hold it for you.
 - Pneumatic nail guns may be used while installing doors and trim.
- **Landscaping**
 - Use proper tools for the job.
 - Do not over lift – place supplies as close to the work area as possible. Get help if needed.
 - Contact electric, gas, and phone companies for the location of lines prior to digging.