Habitat for Humanity
Construction Safety Rules

Introduction

Safety is everybody's concern and is always an important consideration at any construction site. Building construction can be one of the most dangerous occupations. 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. It is very important that we at Habitat know about safe work practices and follow them.

Guidelines for a Safe Attitude

1) Think before you do your work or task.
2) If you are uncertain about how to do a task or how to operate a power tool-ASK A SUPERVISOR.
3) Concentrate on your task and eliminate distractions.
4) Know where the first-aid kit is located and how to get emergency help.
5) Inspect all power tools, hand tools, ladders and scaffolding on a daily basis.
6) Advise your supervisor IMMEDIATELY of any unsafe or hazardous tool or condition.
7) Smoking or any other tobacco use is prohibited on the work site.
8) No alcoholic beverages are permitted

Release and Waiver of Liability

Volunteers are required to sign a Release and Waiver of Liability before volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. Volunteers under 18 years of age are required to provide a Release and Waiver of Liability signed by their parents.

Volunteer Accident Medical Insurance Coverage

Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County WI carries a Volunteer Accident Medical Insurance Policy. This policy provides limited coverage to volunteers who are injured while participating in Habitat supervised and sponsored activities, taking place on or off the premises of the affiliate. Coverage is written as excess to the volunteer's own health insurance coverage. If the volunteer is uninsured, coverage will be primary.

Volunteer Accident Disability Insurance Coverage

Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County WI carries a Volunteer Disability Insurance Policy, which provides a lost wage benefit to volunteers that are injured while participating in a Habitat supervised and sponsored event and are unable to return to the regular employment as a result of the injury. Coverage would begin after

the volunteer has missed one week of regular employment and could last for up to one year. This coverage will pay regardless of other coverage the volunteer may have in place for disability.

Youth on the Construction Site

Construction is a hazardous occupation. Under Federal wage and hour laws, children under the age of 16 are not allowed to work at a construction site, and children under the age of 18 are not allowed to engage in hazardous activities such as roofing. On a Habitat for Humanity construction site, children under the age of 18 are not allowed to engage in any activities deemed hazardous by the Habitat for Humanity construction staff.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Remember Common Sense:

1. THINK before you do your work or task.
2. If you are uncertain about how to do a task or how to operate a power tool—ASK A SUPERVISOR.
3. Concentrate on your task and eliminate distractions.
4. Know where the first-aid kit is located and how to get emergency help.
5. Inspect all power tools, hand tools, ladders and scaffolding on a daily basis.
6. Advise your supervisor IMMEDIATELY of any unsafe or hazardous tool or condition.

Proper Safety Equipment

1. **Proper clothing**
   Understand that proper clothing is essential to safety as is the proper selection and use of tools. Wear clothes and gloves that are appropriate for the work and weather conditions. Loose clothing is dangerous around power tools. Workers shall wear work boots and thick-soled shoes at all times when on a construction site. Any worker wearing sandals or other types of inappropriate footwear shall not be permitted to remain at a construction site.
2. **Hard hats**
   Wear while doing demolition work, during the framing phase of construction, while others are working above you, or when required by a supervisor, and are to be made available to workers on each job site at all times.
3. **Protective eyewear**
   Eyewear will be available onsite. A worker must wear protective glasses any time he or she is operating a power tool or when determined necessary by a Habitat supervisor.
4. **Dust masks**
   Each worker must wear a dust mask when installing insulation, sanding or when instructed by a supervisor.
5. **Earplugs**
   Earplugs are essential when using a power tool for a prolonged period of time or when instructed by a Supervisor. Please let us know if you need some.
6. **Gloves**
   Appropriate gloves should be worn for the task being completed. For example, heavy duty rubber gloves for concrete work. Gloves should fit snugly. See your supervisor for assistance.

Power Tools and Other Electrical Equipment

1. **Wait for instruction**
   A power tool should not be used without proper instruction on its use and instruction on what can happen if the tool is not used properly. The instruction should be done by a qualified person and should be given to all workers; even experienced do-it-yourselfers should receive instruction. The trainee should use the power tool in the presence of the instructor, until the instructor is satisfied that the trainee knows how to use the power tool properly. Never lower or carry a power tool by its cord. Clean tools daily.
2. **Check for defects**

Power tools should be checked for defective switches, cords, plugs and proper grounding. Pay special attention to blade guards to make sure they operate correctly. Under no circumstances should you ever disable a blade guard. Defective tools should be tagged as such and placed aside where they can't be used. Be sure to report these tools to the supervisor immediately. (Do not wait until the end of the day.)

Examine extension cords
To avoid electrical shock, the following rules must be obeyed: A three-pronged plug must be used 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

1. **Select the proper tool**
   Always select the correct type and size of tool for your work and be sure it is sharp and properly adjusted. If in doubt, ask the construction foreman or supervisor.
2. **Check the condition of the tool**
   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.
3. **Hold tools correctly**
   When using tools, hold them correctly. Most edged tools should be held in both hands with the cutting action away from yourself. Avoid using your hand or fingers as a guide to start a cut, if it is absolutely necessary, use extreme caution. If it is difficult for you to hold the tool correctly, let the supervisor or construction foreman know so you can receive help.
4. **Handle and carry tools with care**
   Keep edged and pointed tools turned downward. Carry only a few tools at one time unless they are mounted in a special holder or carried in a tool belt. Anyone working with a hammer at a height should wear a hammer loop or tool belt, and when not in use, the hammer should be kept in the loop or belt and not placed on a sloping surface or in a precarious position. Do not carry sharp tools in your pockets. When not in use, tools should be kept in special boxes, chests or cabinets
5. **Use extreme caution with saws**
   Don't bind the blade of any saw. When cutting long panels, the blade may bind, and the saw will catch and kick back toward the operator. Use small wood wedges or shim shingles to spread the saw cut as you go along.
6. **Maintain the blade guard**
   A spring-actuated blade guard often can 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 use
If the ladder is unsafe, don't use it. Look for wear and tear, loose rungs and defects. Use a ladder that will reach the work.

Use ladders of proper length
An extension ladder should reach three feet above the work level. Move your ladder with your work. Do not place a ladder on top of a box or object to extend; always select a ladder that will reach the desired work area safely.

Move your ladder with your work
If both of your shoulders are extended outside the ladder while you are working, you are reaching too far. Keep your belt buckle within the rails of the ladder, and be sure to move your ladder with your work.

Set your ladder at the proper angle

When using an extension ladder, use the "4-to-1" rule: For every four feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder one foot away from the wall. A ladder is pitched at the proper, safe angle if you can grasp a rung at shoulder height.

Place your ladder on solid footing

If there is a danger of the ladder moving while you work, tie it down. If the feet of the ladder are not level, dig the ground out under one foot with the claw of a hammer.

Keep it Clean and Clear

Make sure the ladder and your shoes are dry and clean of mud or debris to prevent slipping. If the ladder is in a high traffic area or in danger of being hit, barricade the doorway or entrance until the ladder work is done.

Be cautious with aluminum ladders

Never use an aluminum ladder in the vicinity of electrical lines, use fiberglass ladders. Always move ladders in a horizontal position to avoid contact with overhead lines. Never use a ladder outdoors during inclement weather or on very windy days. Carry tools and materials in proper carrying devices and keep your hands free for climbing. When climbing, always face the ladder.

Roofs

1. **Avoid Slippery Roofs and Excessive Wind**
   Avoid any roof which may be covered in rain, snow or ice. This presents a major slip hazard. Wait until the surface is dry before accessing a roof to perform any work. Wind also posses a danger when working atop a roof. If winds are in excess of 20 miles per hour, it may be best to avoid rooftop work that day.
2. **Keep the Roof Clean**
   Keep the roof clean and clear of debris or spare roofing materials that could cause someone to slip or trip over. Rubber-soled boots typically provide better traction than leather-soled boots. Whatever footwear you decide to wear, make sure they're in good condition and the soles are clean (no caked-on mud).
3. **Install Temporary Wood Cleats for Toe Holds or Roof Brackets**
   Nail 2" x 4" wood cleats or adjustable roof jacks to the roof deck to provide temporary toe holds. Remove the cleats or roof jacks as the roofing is installed. Use roof brackets to build slide guards using 2x6's. They are a great safety net if someone does slip or slide. Roof brackets also provide a place to hang a bucket to keep your tools in while up on the roof.
4. **Use a Tie-off on Steep Roofs**
   On steeply pitched roofs, be sure to wear a safety harness that is securely tied to a fall resistant device.
5. **Tool Safety on Roofs**
   Tools dropped from roofs are a major cause of workplace injuries. When you're not using your power tools, secure them with short lengths of rope or Bungee cords. Keep hand tools and small supplies in a 5-gallon bucket hung on a roof bracket. If you do not use roof brackets, *always* check the ground below before dropping anything from the roof.
6. **Mark or Rope-off the Ground Below**
   Clearly mark off the ground beneath your overhead work area to let workers on the ground know you are working above. Always look and call out before tossing anything down. If your access point to the roof is an extension ladder, make sure the top of the ladder extends three feet beyond the roof line.

Scaffolding

1. **Use the proper scaffolding**
   Scaffolding should be erected and dismantled under the supervision of a competent person. All scaffolding that is elevated 10 feet or more must be equipped with a toprail set at 42 inches and a midrail at 21 inches. All scaffolds must be equipped with a toe board to eliminate the possibility that tools or debris will be kicked or pushed onto people below. A scaffold must be designed to support four times the weight of the workers and the materials resting on it. Scaffolding components that are not designed to be compatible should NEVER be mixed.
2. **Inspect scaffolding every day**

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

3. **Many scaffolding accidents are caused by defective walk boards**
   Use only properly graded and inspected lumber for planking. Inspect planking daily for splits and knots, and remove defective or damaged planking.
4. **Planking Measurements**
   The front edge of the platform should be within 14 inches of the face of the work. Extend planks at least 6 inches over the edge, but never more than 12 inches beyond the end supports. This will prevent tipping.

Floor and Wall Openings

1. **Holes in the floor**
   Cover floor openings larger than 2x2 inches with material to safely support the working load. Be sure to mark it with chalk, spray paint or in any way, so that other workers are aware of the opening.
2. **Stairwell openings**
   Construct guardrails around floor openings such as a stair well, with a toprail at 42 inches and a midrail at 21 inches off the ground. You may want to install a toe board, as well if anyone will be underneath the opening.
3. **Window openings**
   Install a guardrail in front of openings in walls when the fall distance is 6 feet or greater. Be sure the guard can withstand a 200 pound load. A typical 2x4 will do the job.

Clean Job Site

1. **Maintain a clean job site**
   A clean work place is a safe 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.
2. **Clean up all rubbish and scrap as you go**
   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 can constitute a hazard.
3. **Return tools and equipment that are not being used to the tool container**
   This protects the tools and the workers. Never leave a work site unguarded unless all tools and materials have been properly secured.

Blood Borne Pathogens

What are blood borne pathogens? Blood borne pathogens are viruses or bacteria present in human blood and bodily fluids, which can infect and cause disease in humans. The two most notable of these are Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS, and Hepatitis B Virus (HBV).

HIV is a virus that attacks a certain type of white blood cell, the T-cell, which is a vital part of the body's immune system. HIV infects the T-cells, multiplies inside them and eventually destroys them.

HBV causes the Hepatitis B infection. The incubation period of Hepatitis B ranges from 45 to 160 days. The onset of the acute disease occurs gradually and is discovered in the patient only after the illness has become fully involved.

The two most common ways blood borne pathogens are spread through sexual transmission or IV drug use. However, **any contact with infected blood or body fluids carries the risk of potential infection.**

How to protect yourself from blood borne pathogens

1. Protect yourself first…treat the victim SECOND.
2. Treat all blood and body fluid spills as if they are infectious.
3. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Most accident responses will require only gloves for adequate protection; however, other protection may include gowns, face shields, facemasks and eye protection.

First aid and emergency care

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

We invite all volunteers who are trained or certified in first aid and CPR to identify themselves.
Do **NOT** attempt to treat anyone unless you are trained medical staff.
1. Get help. Notify the Habitat construction staff immediately.
2. Get help. If you are hurt and can walk, notify the construction staff immediately.
3. Get help. If you see someone hurt, notify the construction staff immediately.

First aid kits are located on the jobsite and in Habitat vehicles.

Updated 7-31-08