



Safety Guidelines

Worksite safety, especially on a construction site, is everyone's concern. Since Habitat for Humanity work crews often have a high percentage of inexperienced volunteers, safety is of the utmost importance and must be paid attention to by everyone. Be aware at all times (of both yourself and others) and, if you do not know how to do something or are uncomfortable with a task, make sure to notify your crew leader; that is part of the reason that they are there. Please arrive on time for the morning safety talk.

Before beginning work:

- Listen attentively to the morning safety talk.
- Think about the task at hand.
- As aforementioned, if you do not know how to do something, make sure to ask your crew leader.
- Make sure that you know both where the first-aid kits are located as well as the best way to get emergency assistance. It is good to know where your crew leader is at all times.
- Do not climb a ladder or operate a power tool before inspecting it. Additionally, you should notify your crew leader immediately upon discovering an unsafe situation or damaged tool. Do not wait until the end of the work day to alert a supervisor.
- Instruction should be given on the usage of any power tool, even to experienced workers. Volunteers should use the tool in the presence of the crew leader before being left alone.

Clothing:

- Make sure to wear proper clothing for both the weather and the task at hand. If you feel that gloves, protective glasses, a helmet or any other article of safety clothing is required for a specific task, do not be afraid to ask.
- While boots are certainly not discouraged on a construction worksite, they are not required. Never come to the worksite in open-toed shoes (e.g. sandals). If you are seen wearing any kind of open foot-wear while on site, you will be asked to leave.
- When operating a power tool protective glasses must be worn (as well as earplugs when the tool is being operated for any long period of time).
- When installing insulation, a dust mask is required.
- If you need it, make sure to wear sunscreen and bug spray.

Safety measures while working:

- Ignore outside distractions while working on your task (i.e. do not answer your cell phone). If you must take a call, please wait until you are at a safe point to pause the activity at hand and then walk away from the site and call them back).
- When carrying a beam of wood, bracing or any other long, cumbersome object, be very conscious of your surroundings as you may inadvertently strike someone. Generally, the person with the load has the right of way when passing.
- When lifting, use your legs, not your back.

- Check behind yourself when preparing to use a hammer so as to avoid striking someone with the claw.
- Make sure to stay hydrated at all times. Although we do provide water, a personal container should be brought to the worksite.
- If at any point you feel sick, safely stop what you are doing and notify your crew leader.
- Be aware of your footing at all times. The ground is often uneven and footing which may seem secure is often not (e.g. an un-nailed decking or stacked OSB). This is especially true when roofing or working on scaffolding.
- No alcohol or drug use is permitted on the worksite. If you are seen using these substances or are noticed to be under the influence, you will be asked to leave.
- No one under the age of 18 is allowed on a roof at any point.
- While working on the roof, safety harnesses are used.
- If you are not comfortable with heights, do not go on the roof. When on the roof, make sure to keep your weight towards the peak. Make sure to never place any tools on the roof and to be aware of the edges of the roof at all times.

Tool use:

- Volunteers must first receive instruction from a house leader before using power tools.
- Never lower or carry a power tool by its cord.
- Inspect a ladder to make sure that it is properly set up before use.
- If a power tool is dirty, it should be cleaned off before being left for the day.
- When using an electric saw, make sure that the cord is behind and away from the saw.
- Never use a power tool above shoulder height.
- Regarding electricity, a three-pronged plug should be used on all power tools and cord connections should be protected from water. Extension cords should not have frayed insulation or be held up by staples, nails or wires. All temporary lights should be equipped with non-conductive guards. Only use power tools under dry conditions (i.e. never in the rain).
- Make sure to choose the correct size and type of tool necessary for a particular action.
- Do not use any tool that appears to have a loose handle or is in poor shape (e.g. a dull blade).
- Make sure that your tool remains clean; oil and dirt can cause a tool to slip.
- Make sure to cut **away** from yourself and avoid using a body part as a guide for a cut.
- Edged and pointed tools should be pointed downwards and, generally, held in both hands.
- When high up (e.g. on a ladder, roof, etc.) a hammer should always be kept in a hammer loop or tool belt. **Do not** place hammers (or any other tool) on top of a ladder or a sloping surface.
- Sharp tools should not be carried in pockets and, when not in use, tools should be put away.
- When cutting long panels it is possible the blade may bind, often causing the saw mill to catch and kick back towards the user. Make sure to never cut anything that could tilt or fall and cause the saw to slip. Notify your supervisor of any damage to a blade guard and **never** tie back the guard to get it out of the way.

- When using a circular saw, make sure that the lumber is properly supported. Always extend the lumber past the outside edge of the support and then cut. You may need a helper to loosely support the lumber.
- When using a chop saw (miter saw) never cross your arms under the blade. Make sure that your hands and/or fingers are a safe distance away from the blade. Even though it is called a “chop saw”, make sure to pull the blade downward in a slow even manner.

Ladders:

- As has already been stated, do not climb a ladder before inspecting it and do not leave any tools on top of a ladder. If you notice any defects, loose rungs or other signs of damage, notify your crew leader.
- Make sure that the ladder is on a solid, stable surface. Do not mount a ladder that is liable to move while you are on it. It is better to dig a hole to even out the feet of a ladder than to raise a foot with an object (e.g. wooden blocks).
- Make sure to keep your hips within the railing of the ladder. Do not lean to one side.
- A good rule of thumb for a ladder is that for every 4 feet of height, the ladder should be moved 1 foot away from the wall against which it is leaning.
- A ladder should never be used outdoors during a storm or on very windy days. Additionally, never use a metal ladder anywhere near power lines.
- Make sure to keep hands free and to face forward while climbing a ladder. If necessary, use a carrying device such as a tool belt to bring tools up.

Work site:

- Many accidents can be prevented by maintaining a clean and orderly worksite.
- Materials and supplies should be maintained in such a way as to allow for walking.
- Do not leave wood, nails, wire, bolts, scrap materials or garbage to remain on the ground.
- As previously mentioned, all tools and equipment should be placed in their proper storage containers; do not leave tools laying out.
- Never leave the worksite unguarded unless all of the tools and materials have been properly stored and secured.

General health:

- Any poison or toxic substances encountered should immediately be reported to a supervisor.
- Upon being injured or seeing another that is injured, notify a supervisor and call for any necessary medical assistance. All crew leaders are trained in first-aid.
- First-aid kits are on site and should be used when necessary.