



Basics of Construction/ Contractor Jobsite Safety

Whether your workers operate cranes, weld structural steel, pave sidewalks, paint trim, or clean construction debris, they are exposed to safety & health hazards at the jobsite.

These hazards can cause injury, illness, or even death in event of mishap. Mishaps can also lead to missed deadlines, first aid & medical expenses, & downtime, which reduce your profitability. This sheet lists some common jobsite hazards (shown in bold) & precautions (shown in normal type); it is not all-encompassing. Your local chapter of the National Safety Council, OSHA, vocational school, & perhaps union can provide additional information & training.

Jobsite hazards & precautions include:

- **Structural parts not permanently secured yet** (*e.g. walls, floors, ceilings*) Anchor parts until permanently secured; post warning signs to remind workers; equip workers with fall protection and/or other needed protective equipment
- **Workers/contractors doing other trades near your workers** (*e.g. welders producing sparks & arc flash that can injure unprotected eyes, noisy power tools, assembling girders & beams which may collapse until permanently anchored; nearby power saws hurling debris*) Remind your workers about hazards of nearby trades & how to protect themselves. Schedule work after or before other trades work. Equip workers with protective gear
- **Temporary electricity, heat, & other utilities causing electrocution or fire**
Keep wires clear from workers; provide ground fault circuit interrupters (*GFCI*); do not leave ends of wires uncovered; maintain clearance between heating equipment & combustibles; turn heating equipment off at end of shift
- **Compressed gas cylinders can become flying missiles; fire hazard** (*e.g. welding gas, LP gas for temporary heating*)
Chain secure cylinders to stationary objects to prevent their tipping over; store them away from ignition sources; store extra cylinders & empty cylinders outdoors or at a distance from jobsite
- **Motorized machinery: operators may not hear or see your workers** Remind your workers to be alert to such machinery (*e.g. stay clear of bulldozers; make sure they are in the operator's line of sight*) provide workers with high visibility hardhats, vests, or other clothing to make them more noticeable to machine operators
- **Other trades asking your workers to lend a hand for a moment** Your workers may not understand the hazards of another trade's work or may lack the necessary protective equipment; remind them to be careful when they lend a hand & to politely refuse if they are exposed to danger (Courtesy is admirable unless it endangers.)
- **Emergencies can occur** (*e.g. fire; natural disaster; falls; cuts; other injuries*) Distribute written copies of emergency plan to your workers; post copy of emergency plan including emergency phone numbers conspicuously; provide first aid training & gear; provide phone or other means to call for paramedics or other emergency help
- **Slip & fall hazards** (*e.g. scaffolding; ladders; catwalks; uneven walking surfaces; tools/cords/hoses/boards strewn about walkways*) Remind workers to watch their step; provide fall protection equipment as needed; keep walkways clear; provide adequate lighting
- **Hazardous chemicals** (*e.g. explosives; solvents; paints; fuels*) Train workers in hazards & safe handling of the chemicals; use & store chemicals as specified in Material Safety Data Sheets (*MSDS*)
- **Weather-related hazards** (*e.g. cold; heat; humidity; rain; storms*) Provide rest areas for relief from the elements; ensure workers wear necessary protective equipment (*e.g. hardhats even though temperature is high; warm gloves that are not so bulky that workers are unable to grasp tools properly*); halt work when severe weather threatens (*e.g. using cranes in lightning*); take rest breaks as needed; provide adequate drinking fluids
- **Dangerous animals** (*e.g. rabid squirrels; rabid skunks; snakes; poisonous insects, etc.*) Survey jobsite at beginning of shift to ensure none are present & to scare them away; provide first aid in case of bite/sting; provide insect repellent/insecticide as needed; provide pest control as needed (*e.g. exterminator; gun to shoot rabid skunks at remote sites*)

- **Other outdoor hazards** (e.g. motor vehicle traffic; excess exposure to sun causing skin cancer) Provide barricades, flagpersons, & other traffic control devices as needed; provide sunscreen for workers
- **Ladders** Use non-conducting ladders (e.g. wood; fiberglass) near electrical wiring; keep ladder rungs clean; do not overload ladders; only 1 person to a ladder at a time unless designed for more than 1; extend ladder rails at least 3' above landing surface or secure to it; place ladder base 1' away from wall for every 4' of elevation
- **Scaffolding** Use guardrails, midrails, & toeboards; lock wheels when workers are atop scaffolding; do not move scaffolding when workers are on it; use a screen between toeboard & guardrail if people work under scaffolding (to catch falling tools & materials). Scaffold should be attached to building. Planks should overlap; adequate number of planks (no open areas); planks stamped by OSHA; ladder to climb on (make sure employees use ladders) (no jumping). Inspect scaffolding daily by a competent person
- **Power tools/machines** Remind workers to never distract operators (a friendly pat on the back can distract an operator & cause him to put a hand upon a moving saw blade); use GFCI with grounded or double insulated tools to prevent electrocution; wear protective equipment as needed (e.g. goggles; earplugs)