



High Hazard Activities Safety Talk

A construction job site is a place that is often a place where you, as well as coworkers, are coming to help build or even repair a building. These sites are full of hazards and safety issues. You are often required to work with large tools, machinery, and work at heights above 6 feet as well as with hazardous materials. A construction site can be dangerous for everyone working there and visiting the site. As a worker, it is up to you to know what hazards could be on a job site and how to keep yourself safe.

High Hazard Activities

There are major hazards on every construction job site. While a majority of the fatalities fall into these four categories:

- Falls
- Electrocution
- Struck by/in
- Caught by/ between

These four categories can be found almost anywhere on the job site. However, there are certain activities that these types of hazards are especially present in. These activities can include:

- Working at heights (Falls)
- Working on energized equipment (Electrocution)
- Working near overhead power lines (Electrocution)
- Lifting and rigging (Electrocution, Caught-in/ between, Struck-by)
- Excavation work (Caught-in/between, Electrocution, Struck-by)
- Confined space work (Caught-in/between)

More tasks on a job site can be considered high hazard activities but these are some that are on the list of OSHA's "fatal four hazards."

Falls and How to Prevent

Falls are the number one cause of fatal injuries in the construction work field. The main causes of construction site falls are unprotected edges and opening, improper scaffolding construction or use, and improper ladder use.

Fall protection is required by OSHA if you are working at a height of 6 feet or more or anytime someone is working over dangerous machinery and equipment. If working on scaffolds fall protection must be provided if working 10 feet or more above the lower level. Examples of fall protection are guardrails, safety nets, and personal fall arrest systems.

When using scaffolding ensure they comply with manufacturer and OSHA standards.



Place them on stable ground and inspect them before each use. If you are using a ladder on a construction site make sure you are using the correct ladder for the job. Always use a ladder on flat, level ground. Do not overload the ladder, and make sure to face the ladder when climbing and maintain 3 points of contact at all times. Some ways to prevent falls include:

- Wear and use personal fall arrest equipment
- Install and maintain perimeter protection
- Cover and secure floor openings and label floor opening covers
- Use ladders and scaffolds safely

Preventing falls can be easy if you take your time and use some safety precautions.

Electrocution and How to Prevent

Electrocution is second in line for construction site injuries and fatalities. Electrocution results when a person is exposed to a lethal amount of electrical energy. An electrical hazard can be defined as a serious workplace hazard that exposes workers to the following electrical injuries:

- Burns
- Electrocution
- Shock
- Arc flash/ arc blast
- Fire
- Explosions

Major types of electrocution incidents come from failure to recognize and come into contact with energized sources. Other causes are an improper use of extension and flexible cords and contact with overhead power lines. Ways to prevent electrocution include:

- Locate and identify utilities before starting work
- Look for overhead power lines when operating any equipment
- Maintain a safe distance away from power lines
- Do not operate portable electric tools unless they are grounded and double insulated
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters for protection
- Be alert to electrical hazards when working with ladders, scaffolds, or other platforms

Electrocution is a very dangerous and fatal hazard on many job sites. Keep yourself and fellow coworkers safe by following the correct safety precautions.

Struck by/in and How to Prevent

Struck by injuries occur when a worker comes into forcible contact with a flying, falling,



swinging, or rolling object. The 4 common hazards in construction are:

- Struck by falling objects- These injuries can encompass everything from tools and materials being knocked off unprotected edges to a suspended load on a crane coming loose.
- Struck by flying objects- this can include being struck by an accidental nail gun discharge, thrown tools or debris, or the tip flying off a saw blade.
- Struck by swinging objects- These injuries are caused by swinging objects and usually occur when materials are being moved and something causes the load to sway. Can also happen when a worker is inside the swing radius of a heavy piece of machinery.
- Struck by rolling objects- Injuries caused by rolling objects usually involves a worker being struck by a vehicle or heavy piece of machinery while it is in motion. This can also include any object that rolls, moves, or slides on the same level as the worker.

When you are trying to prevent injuries and hazards being aware of your surroundings is a great way to start. Ways to prevent struck-by incidents include:

- Never position yourself between moving and fixed objects
- Wear high visibility clothes near equipment and vehicles
- Wear personal protective equipment including hard hats and eye safety

Caught by/Between and How to Prevent

Caught in/between hazards are caused when a worker is compressed between or gets caught in equipment or objects. It can also include a worker getting killed by getting caught, stuck, or crushed from materials, equipment, or a collapsing structure. This can include getting your hand caught in a moving part of the equipment, being buried by trench cave-ins, and getting pinned between a wall and a piece of heavy equipment. Ways to prevent caught in and caught between injuries include:

- Never enter an unprotected trench or excavation 5 feet or deeper without an adequate protective system in place
- Make sure trench or excavation is protected either by sloping, shoring, benching, or trench field systems
- Only operate machinery with safety guards that are in place and working
- Never wear loose clothing or anything that could hang down and get caught in moving parts
- Never place yourself between a moving object and a wall
- Never overload or overwork a piece of heavy equipment

Use Caution During High Hazard Activities

As with all other hazards on a construction site using the proper planning and safety precautions as well as being aware of everything going on around you can make the



site safer for you and others that are working with you.

The construction industry is full of many job hazards and it is not easy to prevent every one of them. Making yourself aware of the dangers is the easiest way to prevent getting yourself or your coworkers injured while on a site.

When you are working on a high hazard task make sure you pre-planning your activities, understand the safety concerns with the task and any OSHA regulation that may be associated with said task, and make sure you know to stop the task if it gets too dangerous to complete. If you should have any questions with a safety concern or with a task you are to do please ask your supervisor or foreman.