



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, and 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 hurl 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 equip & combustibles; turn heating equip 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, always understand the potential hazards, and 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 safety & health and emergency plans 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 (including guardrails) as needed; keep walkways clear; provide adequate lighting; provide guards on protruding reinforcing steel.

- **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); develop an adequate hazard communication program.
- **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.
- **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 energized wiring or equipment; 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 upon it; use a screen between toeboard & guardrail if people work under scaffolding (to catch falling tools & materials).
- **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).
- **Respiratory Protection** – (e.g. welding fumes, concrete dust, etc.). Effort should be made to reduce or eliminate hazardous respiratory exposure through engineering controls. If residual exposure is present, outfit workers with proper respirators, ventilation, and/or exposure monitoring
- **Safety and Health Program** – OSHA representatives have noted a strong correlation between the application of sound management practices in the operation of safety and health programs and a low incidence of occupational injuries and illnesses. Where effective safety and health management is practiced, injury and illness rates are significantly less than rates at comparable worksites where safety and health management is weak or non-existent.
- **Employee training** – All workers should be trained in the identification and avoidance of safety risks. One such training option would be the OSHA 10-hour worker training program.
- **Regular inspections** – Inspect both the jobsite and equipment regularly and note any safety deficiencies that must be corrected. Review worker behavior for compliance with the safety and health program. Inspections should be documented.

#### References / Additional Resources

 [Construction Industry – Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)

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