



SAFETY PAGES

January 2023
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Remember if you have any safety suggestions, questions or concerns please let us know. In addition, if you have a safety topic that you would like covered in a Safety Page for training purposes let us know and we will develop one. Topics to our inventory of monthly Safety Pages are continually being added.



The OHBA/SAIF Safety Pages are an ongoing series of pages, designed to provide a selection of safety topics each month to OHBA members. Please use these pages to add to (or start) either a Safety Committee file or manual for your company. Some of the Safety Pages will be on general topics and others will be for Owner/Supervisors. The Owner/Supervisor Safety Pages will be on topics based more on compliance or suggested management safety practices.

IMPORTANT NOTICE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Oregon Home Builders Association Safety Committee's purpose is to provide safety guidelines, information and resources to help our members work more safely and reduce jobsite accidents. Full and active monthly participation in safety meetings using the OHBA Safety Committee's agendas, topics and checklists will only meet safety committee requirements. It remains your responsibility to comply with all aspects of safety rules and regulations.

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OHBA Safety Pages: Hand Safety

Introduction:

Protecting your fingers and hands is important for your work and quality of life. Work-related hand injuries are one of the leading reasons workers end up in the emergency room and miss work. Damage to the nerves in your fingers and hands, loss of a finger, a skin burn, or allergic reaction, can negatively impact the quality of your work, your productivity – or worse – end your career and seriously detract from your quality of life. The cost of these types of injuries and illnesses to the construction industry is estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year.



Main Message:

- Always stay alert and focused on keeping your hands safe – not just at the start of work or a task.
- Keep guards on machinery and power tools in place – Don't remove or reposition them. • Use tools and equipment designed for the work being performed and use them as instructed by your supervisor and/or the manufacturer.
- Don't put your hands or fingers near the moving parts of a power tool or equipment. Make sure machinery, equipment and power tools are completely off before you try replacing, cleaning or repairing parts – follow lock-out/ tag-out procedures.
- Identify safety features on tools and equipment before you use them, such as emergency off switches.
- Check tools and equipment to make sure they are in proper working order before beginning a task.
- Keep hands and fingers away from sharp edges (blades, protruding nails, etc.). Never cut toward the palm of your hand.
- Select hand tools that are ergonomic for your hand (the right size, lowest weight, and have features such as grips, anti-vibration handles, handle angles that allow you to work without your wrist bent.)
- Wear gloves that fit your hand and are right for the work being performed – not all gloves protect against all hazards.
- Do not wear rings, other jewelry or loose articles of clothing that could get caught on a moving object.



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Supervisor: _____
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OHBA Safety Pages: Seven Common Accident Causes

Introduction:

Consider this statistic: 80 out of every 100 accidents are the fault of the person involved in the incident. Unsafe acts cause four times as many accidents and injuries as unsafe conditions.

Accidents occur for many reasons. In most industries people tend to look for "things" to blame when an accident happens, because it's easier than looking for "root causes," such as those listed below.

Consider the underlying accident causes described. Have you been guilty of any of these attitudes or behaviors? If so, you may have not been injured...but next time you may not be so lucky.



Main Message:

1. **Taking Shortcuts:** Every day we make decisions we hope will make the job faster and more efficient. But do time savers ever risk your own safety, or that of other crew members? Short cuts that reduce your safety on the job are not shortcuts but an increased chance for injury.
2. **Being Over-Confident:** Confidence is a good thing. Overconfidence is too much of a good thing. "It'll never happen to me" is an attitude that can lead to improper procedures, tools, or methods in your work. Any of these can lead to an injury.
3. **Starting a Task with Incomplete Instructions:** To do the job safely and right the first time you need complete information. Have you ever seen a worker sent to do a job, having been given only a part of the job's instructions? Don't be shy about asking for explanations about work procedures and safety precautions. It isn't dumb to ask questions; it's dumb not to.
4. **Poor Housekeeping:** When clients, managers or safety professionals walk through your work site, housekeeping is an accurate indicator of everyone's attitude about quality, production, and safety. Poor housekeeping creates hazards of all types. A well-maintained area sets a standard for others to follow. Good housekeeping involves both pride and safety.
5. **Ignoring Safety Procedures:** Purposely failing to observe safety procedures can endanger you and your co-workers. You are being paid to follow the company safety policies-not to make your own rules. Being "casual" about safety can lead to a casualty!
6. **Mental Distractions from Work:** Having a bad day at home and worrying about it at work is a hazardous combination. Dropping your 'mental' guard can pull your focus away from safe work procedures. You can also be distracted when you're busy working and a friend comes by to talk while you are trying to work. Don't become a statistic because you took your eyes off the machine "just for a minute."
7. **Failure to Pre-Plan the Work:** There is a lot of talk today about Job Hazard Analysis. JHA's are an effective way to figure out the smartest ways to work safely and effectively. Being hasty in starting a task, or not thinking through the process can put you in harm's way. Instead, Plan Your Work and then Work Your Plan.

"It is better to be careful 100 times than to get killed once." Mark Twain



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OHBA Safety Pages: Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that often goes undetected, striking victims caught off guard or in their sleep.

More than 400 people in the U.S. die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). More than 20,000 visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 others are hospitalized.

This "invisible killer" is produced by burning fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, portable generators or furnaces. When the gas builds up in enclosed spaces, people or animals who breathe it can be poisoned. Ventilation does not guarantee safety.



How Can I Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning?

Winter can be a prime time for carbon monoxide poisoning as people turn on their heating systems and mistakenly warm their cars in garages. So, as the weather turns colder, it's important to take extra precautions. In construction, carbon monoxide hazards can be present all year long.

The National Safety Council recommends you install a battery-operated or battery backup carbon monoxide detector in areas where carbon monoxide poisoning can occur. Check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall and replace the detector every five years.

The CDC offers these additional tips:

- Have your gas-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year
- Do not use portable flameless chemical heaters indoors
- Never use a generator inside a home, basement or garage or less than 20 feet from any window, door or vent; fatal levels of carbon monoxide can be produced in just minutes, even with open doors/windows
- Never run a gas-burning appliance or engine in a garage that is attached to a house, even with the garage door open; always open the door to a detached garage to let in fresh air

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

The U.S. Fire Administration has put together materials on the dangers of carbon monoxide, including a list of carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms.

Symptom severity varies depending on the level of carbon monoxide and duration of exposure. Mild symptoms sometimes are mistaken for flu.

Low to moderate carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness

High-level carbon monoxide poisoning results in:

- Mental confusion
- Vomiting
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

If you think you are experiencing any of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, go outside and get fresh air immediately. You could lose consciousness and die if you stay in the location.

Source Material: NSC



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OHBA Safety Pages: Working Safely in Cold Weather

Introduction:

Winter has arrived in Oregon with colder temperatures alongside the rain and snow. Anyone working in a cold environment may be at risk of cold stress. Working in cold conditions isn't just uncomfortable, it can be dangerous. Frostbite, numbness, dehydration and hypothermia are real concerns from chilly outdoor weather. If you're working outdoors this winter, be aware of the dangers and stay safe.



Main Message:

How Cold is Too Cold?

What constitutes extreme cold and its effects can vary across different areas of the country. In regions that are not used to winter weather, near freezing temperatures are considered "extreme cold." A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its temperature. Whenever temperatures drop below normal and wind speed increases, heat can leave your body more rapidly.

Wind chill is the temperature your body feels when air temperature and wind speed are combined. For example, when the air temperature is 40°F, and the wind speed is 35 mph, the effect on the exposed skin is as if the air temperature was 28°F.

Cold stress occurs by driving down the skin temperature and eventually the internal body temperature (core temperature). This may lead to serious health problems, and may cause tissue damage, and possibly death.

Cold Stress Risk Factors

Some of the risk factors that contribute to cold stress are:

- Wetness/dampness, dressing improperly, and exhaustion
- Predisposing health conditions such as hypertension, hypothyroidism, and diabetes
- Poor physical conditioning

Cold Stress Signs and Symptoms

- Cold stress can be identified in a number of ways, but a few of the most common signs to watch for are dehydration, numbness, shivering, frostbite, and arguably the most dangerous, hypothermia.
- Of course, if there is a noticeable drop in your ability to use your hands and fingers, due to numbness or shivering, cold stress may be occurring.
- Loss of mobility in your hands is a common effect of cold stress and can result in safety hazards to you and your coworkers, especially if you are unable to grip a tool or properly handle the materials you're working with.
- Shivering is another of the body's responses to the cold and a potential indicator of the onset of cold stress. Be on guard if you begin to shiver.
- Shivering is the body's protective mechanism that increases the rate of your body's metabolism. This is a solid sign that hypothermia may be at the beginning stages.

Tips for Working Safely in Colder Weather

1. STAY WELL NOURISHED BY EATING AND DRINKING ENOUGH

Make sure to drink enough fluids, as you dehydrate faster in cold weather conditions. Dehydration causes headaches, dizziness and fatigue, and it's important to stay alert outdoors. Eating enough food during the day, especially fats and carbohydrates, is also important. Your body uses those nutrients as energy to stay warm in cold temperatures.

2. STAY WELL RESTED

Working outdoors can be challenging and increases risks to your safety. Make sure you're getting enough sleep to stay alert on the job when conditions are more dangerous.

3. PLAN BREAKS FROM THE COLD

Just like you need to take breaks from your work throughout the day, your body needs to take breaks from the cold. Plan warm-up times throughout your day to avoid numbness and shivers.

4. STAY DRY

Damp clothing can quickly drop your body temperature. It's more important than ever to stay dry in the cold. Wear a moisture-wicking base layer to draw away sweat as you work. Wear waterproof gear as an outer shell to prevent your under layers from getting wet. Remove any wet clothing immediately.

5. DRESS FOR THE CONDITIONS

Dressing in layers is key, as it not only keeps you warm but allows you to adjust to changing temperatures. Proper gloves, socks and footwear are essential. Choose headwear that keeps your head and ears warm. Your body loses 40% of its heat through the head.



Fast Fact:

What is immersion/trench foot?

- *Trench Foot* or immersion foot is caused by prolonged exposure to wet and cold temperatures. It can occur at temperatures as high as 60°F if the feet are constantly wet. Non-freezing injury occurs because wet feet lose heat 25-times faster than dry feet. To prevent heat loss, the body constricts the blood vessels to shut down circulation in the feet. The skin tissue begins to die because of a lack of oxygen and nutrients and due to the buildup of toxic products.
- Redness of the skin, swelling, numbness, blisters are all symptoms of trench foot.
- The proper medical response for trench foot is to call 911 immediately in an emergency; otherwise seek medical assistance as soon as possible. Remove the shoes, or boots, and wet socks, and then dry and cover the feet.



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SAFETY PAGE MEETING GUIDE

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OHBA Safety Pages: How to Safely Remove Snow from Roofs

Snow that piles up on rooftops can cause significant damage to the structure and can be a life-threatening hazard if the building collapses under the snow's weight, or the snow slides off the roof onto an unsuspecting pedestrian.

However, removing snow from roofs is also hazardous. Falls are responsible for most injuries, but workers have been injured and killed when a roof collapses while they are removing the snow. Other hazards related to snow removal include:

- Amputations and eye injuries caused by snow blowers
- Collapses or tip-overs involving aerial lifts
- Entrapment and suffocation under loose snow falling from roof
- Shock and electrocution from energized power lines and damaged extension cords
- Frostbite or hypothermia from cold and wind
- Overexertion injuries from shoveling snow

Is snow removal a maintenance or construction activity?

Removing snow from a roof is typically considered a maintenance activity, which means Oregon OSHA's general occupational safety and health rules apply. It's important to remember that these rules require workers to be protected from falling when they are working at heights of four feet or more above a lower level. You'll find the requirement in Division 2, Subdivision D, 1910.28, Duty to have fall protection.

However, on construction sites where snow must be removed to begin or continue construction work, Oregon OSHA's construction rules apply, and workers must be protected from falling when they are six feet or more above a lower level. You'll find the requirement in Division 3, Subdivision M, 437-003-1501, Fall protection.

How to protect workers from falls

Many workers who remove snow from roofs are inexperienced and do not understand the risks of working at heights or how to protect themselves from falling. So, it's critical that employees who may be required to shovel from roofs know what to do to accomplish the work, the risks of working at heights, and how to protect themselves from falling before they get on the roof.

Considerations for a typical snow removal project include:

- What tools and equipment are necessary to remove the snow?
- Have the workers been trained to safely remove the snow?
- If a snow blower/other heavy equipment is necessary to remove snow, how will it be moved to the roof?
- Will the roof support the weight of the workers and their equipment?
 - Are there skylights or vents that workers could fall through hidden by snow?
- Are there trip hazards on the roof that need to be identified or removed?
- How will people on the ground be protected from snow removed from the roof?

Reducing the risk of a fall

The best strategy for protecting workers from falls is to eliminate the fall risk by having them work from the ground. When they're feasible, roof rakes are the best option for removing snow from roof edges.

Using personal fall-arrest systems

Personal fall-arrest systems are the most common type of fall protection and most workers who regularly do roofing work know how to use it. But that might not be the case for workers who do an occasional snow-removal job.

Anyone who uses a personal fall-arrest system should know:

- How to select and install a secure anchorage
- How to select and use connectors
- How to put on and use a full-body harness
- How to correctly attach and use a lanyard
- When a deceleration device is necessary
- How to use a lifeline
- The correct procedures for using retractable devices
- How to estimate fall distances
- How to avoid swing falls
- How to inspect and maintain the system
- What to do in a fall-arrest emergency

Understanding snow load

The combined weight of snow, workers, and their equipment can cause an unstable roof to collapse. Snow load is the weight of snow, usually expressed in pounds per square foot. Although the weight of snow on a roof depends on factors such as the water content of the snow, how much snow has melted and refrozen, and the roof slope, it is possible to estimate snow load.

One way to estimate the snow load is to cut a 1-foot by 1-foot square – the full depth of the snow – from the roof, put it in a plastic bag, and then weigh the bag. The weight is a good indication of the snow load per square foot on the roof.

The amount of weight that a roof can safely support is based on local building code requirements; the roof must have the strength to support the snow, the workers, and their equipment.

One way to reduce the stress on the roof is to remove the snow uniformly and avoid making snow piles. Workers should be alert for unexpected sounds or movement that could indicate the roof is unstable or unbalanced.

Electrical hazards

Always use extreme caution when working near power lines.

- Assume power lines, wires, and other conductors are energized, even if they appear to be insulated.
- Use snow rakes with nonconductive poles and designate a worker as a monitor to ensure that people and equipment are at least 10 feet away from a power line.
- Make sure that all electrically powered equipment is grounded and includes a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) in the circuit.

Source: Oregon OSHA Health and Safety RESOURCE



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