Teen Construction Safety

HS99-001F (09-10)   A 5-Minute Safety Training Aid

Each year, thousands of young men and women begin part-time or summer construction jobs. Construction sites change day to day, even hour to hour. A wall, pipe, or wire that wasn't there yesterday may seemingly appear overnight. There are also many different trades working on a site at one time. Due to the ever-changing nature of construction sites, it is important to remember a few important safety tips.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE can help protect you from physical and health hazards or potential hazards; and should be worn at all times while on a construction site. If you are unsure about what PPE to use or do not have the appropriate PPE, ask your supervisor.

Protective Headgear (Hard hat)

You should wear a hard hat at all times on a construction site to prevent head injuries that are caused by falling or flying objects, by bumping into fixed objects, or by other objects that may strike your head. Hard hats accomplish two things: resist penetration by the object and absorb shock.

Eye Protection (Safety glasses or goggles)

You should wear safety glasses or goggles on the construction sire to prevent eye injuries that occur when foreign objects come in contact with the eyes. During any job where chipping, grinding, masonry work, woodwork, sawing, drilling, sanding, or painting is being done, eye protection must be worn.

Foot Protection (Safety footwear)

Safety footwear protects toes and feet from being crushed when heavy objects are accidentally dropped. Safety footwear is needed when carrying or handling materials such as lumber, sheetrock, decking, shingles, or heavy tools and for other activities where objects might fall onto your feet. Proper safety footwear is standard dress when working in the construction industry.

Hand Protection (Gloves)

You should check with your supervisor before using gloves, because different types of gloves protect the hands from different chemical or physical hazards. Gloves prevent cuts, abrasions, burns, and splinters from injuring the hands. Wear gloves when handling heavy loads of materials to help protect your hands from cuts and splinters. Gloves also prevent materials from slipping out of your hands.

Safe Lifting Techniques

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, back injuries accounted for 20 percent of the total cases reported for 2008 that required days away from work. The median days away from work for back injuries are seven. To prevent back injuries use these simple lifting techniques:

1. size up the load: ask for help if you need it;
2. plan your route and ensure that it is free of tripping and slipping hazards;
3. keep your feet shoulder width apart;
4. bend your knees: do not bend at the waist;
5. get a good grip: gloves help;
6. keep the load close to your body;
7. lift with your legs — not your back; and
8. pivot your feet — don't twist your back.

Construction jobs are a great way to earn money and learn valuable skills. However they can pose many possible dangers. By following all safety rules set forth by your employer you can enjoy a productive career in the construction industry.

Remember to practice safety. Don't learn it by accident.

Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC) offers several free back injury prevention publications online at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html including, Personal Protective Equipment Fact Sheet, Back Injury Prevention (English/Spanish), Back Injury Prevention, and Safety Training Program.

TDI-DWC also features a free occupational safety and health audiovisual loan library. Call 512-804-4620 for more information or visit our website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation
Resource Center • 512-804-4620 • resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us
Safety Violations Hotline • 1-800-452-9595 • safetyhotline@tdi.state.tx.us

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