



San Diego Services

# Pre-Task Safety Check

OCTOBER WEEK 1

The purpose of a pre-task safety check is to: 1) consider the task you are about to begin, 2) identify and evaluate specific hazards and risks associated with the work that you will be doing, 3) determine the control measures to put in place in order to remove or reduce the hazards present, and 4) implement and act on the control measures.

Even when the task you will be completing is one that you are familiar with, you must take the time to perform a pre-task safety check. Frequently, the tasks that everyone is "used to" or "doesn't have to think about" are the ones with the most commonly overlooked hazards. You don't want to wait until after an injury occurs to consider how to control the hazard. Get in the habit of conducting a pre-task safety check before every task.

There are several options to consider when determining what method or methods should be used to control hazards. You can eliminate the hazard; reduce the hazard by replacing the tool, material, or process with a less hazardous one; separate the hazard from those in the work area; and/or use personal protective equipment.

Following are some questions to consider when conducting your pre-task safety check:

- ✓ Have you considered everything that can hurt you or your co-workers?
- ✓ Do you have the right tools for the job?
- ✓ Have you inspected them for damage or wear?
- ✓ Is there adequate lighting to complete the job safely?

- ✓ Do you know what to do in case of an emergency?
- ✓ Are emergency phone numbers posted nearby?
- ✓ Can you complete the task in the allotted time?
- ✓ Are all walking surfaces free from tripping hazards?
- ✓ Are holes and excavations guarded?
- ✓ Are excavations properly sloped or shored?
- ✓ Are ladders positioned so users don't have to overstretch or climb over obstacles?
- ✓ Are fall protection systems (guardrails, personal fall arrest systems, etc.) in place and being used?
- ✓ Are hazardous materials stored properly?
- ✓ Is the public protected from construction activities?

If you answered "yes" to all of these questions, then you're on your way to working safely. If you answered "no" to any of them, you need to think about changing the way you approach your work.

[Note: you can find a pre-task plan checklist on the web at [www.safetymeetingoutlines.com/checklists](http://www.safetymeetingoutlines.com/checklists)]

### SAFETY REMINDER

**Before you start your car or truck, make sure passengers are strapped in and that any cargo is in a safe place where it won't injure passengers in case of an accident.**

### NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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San Diego Services

# Electrical Hazards

OCTOBER WEEK 2

In construction, electricity is part of the program. It can, however, be dangerous and even fatal if it is not handled properly. Every year hundreds of people are electrocuted in accidents involving voltages of less than 750 volts. Some of those fatalities, and many painful and disabling shocks, occur at 110 volts or less. We call on electricians when we have electrical problems or electrical questions. It is their job to see that the electrical system is set up properly and operating safely. It's also their job to make any changes or repairs that may be necessary.

damage, electrocution, or a fire. Faulty electrical tools, equipment, cords, etc., should be taken out of service and reported. Repairs should be made by a qualified electrician.

Electrical wiring and extension cords are not for hanging clothes, tool belts, shop lights, or anything else. Watch out for extension cords; don't run over them or pile things on them. When you move electrical equipment, don't drag the cords behind the machine. Move the cords separately or pick them up and put them on the machine during the move.

The physical conditions in which you are working can increase electrical hazards. The risk of shock and electrocution go up dramatically when your hands are wet or you are working in a wet environment. Only specially designed, explosion-proof tools should be used where flammable atmospheres exist.

Because we use electricity every day, we may begin to treat it casually. A casual attitude toward electrical safety is the starting point for accidents. Make it a habit to notice and correct electrical hazards and treat electricity with care.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**You wouldn't stick a fork into a toaster at home— treat electricity with the same respect at work.**

**NOTES:**

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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San Diego Services

## GFCIs and AEGCP

OCTOBER WEEK 3

Electricity is the lifeblood of a construction project. In the office it provides power for lights, computers, and other office equipment. In the field, it powers portable electrical tools such as circular saws, drills, concrete vibrators, battery chargers, grinders, and sump pumps. We often take electricity for granted and we don't usually stop and think about what could happen if something were to go wrong.

A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) is the only protection device designed to protect you against electric shock from an electrical system. A GFCI is a fast-acting circuit breaker that continuously monitors the amount of current going to an electrical tool or piece of equipment, and compares it to the amount of current returning along the electrical path. If the difference between the two amounts is more than five milliamps, the GFCI will trip and shut off the electricity in about 1/40 of a second.

GFCIs protect you against ground faults, the most common form of electrical shock hazard at a construction site. They also protect against fires, overheating, and damage to insulation on wiring. GFCIs effectively reduce electrical hazards on construction sites.

An Assured Equipment Grounding Conductor Program (AEGCP) may be implemented when you are not utilizing

GFCIs. Equipment grounding conductors on portable electric hand tools, electrically powered shop equipment, and extension cords are tested for electrical continuity and are inspected for physical damage. Tests must be performed 1) before first use, 2) before equipment is returned to service following any repairs, 3) after damage to the equipment is suspected, and 4) at three-month intervals. Test results must be kept in a log, noting the type of tool or equipment, manufacturer, serial number, type of test, date and inspector's signature. If any equipment fails the tests, it cannot be used by anyone until it is repaired. More information about testing can be found in 29 CFR 1926.404(b)(1)(iii).

GFCIs and AEGCP are only helpful if you use them. Take precautions to be sure you don't use any electrical tool while you are touching or standing in water. If an electrical current has shocked a co-worker, separate him from the current before performing first aid. Never assume a GFCI protection device is operational unless you test it.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**If you need to use an extension cord, make sure it's rated for the tool you're using.**

**NOTES:**

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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# Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)

OCTOBER WEEK 4

In a normal electric circuit, the current flows to a tool, appliance, or light fixture through a hot wire and back to the circuit breaker through a neutral wire. There should not be any current lost; that is, the current in the hot wire should be identical to that in the neutral wire. Any difference is dangerous because it indicates a current leak. If the leaking current flows through a high-resistance conductor or device, it could generate enough heat to start a fire. Electrical leaks can also cause a tool or appliance to become charged with electricity. If you touch the device, your body can provide the path to ground and you could suffer a serious shock. These hazards can be reduced by grounding the devices or stopping the flow of electricity when a leak is detected. Today we will talk in detail about the second option.

A ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) is a device designed to protect you from electrical shock. A GFCI monitors the current in the circuit's hot and neutral conductors. If the two currents are not identical, a leak must exist. When such a leak is detected, the GFCI, which works like a fast-acting circuit breaker, will trip and shut off the power in 1/40 of a second. This eliminates the potential of you being shocked or a fire being started.

If an assured equipment grounding conductor program is not in place, then all equipment that can be plugged into a 110-volt receptacle must be protected by a GFCI. You

can use a GFCI plug-in device or an electric circuit that has a GFCI built into it either at the receptacle or at the circuit breaker. To ensure that GFCIs are working properly, you should follow the manufacturer's instructions for testing.

Some of you may think that GFCIs are just a nuisance because they trip all the time. Actually, they are doing exactly what they are designed to do, which is to protect you from electrical shock. There are several conditions that will trip a GFCI. They include wet or defective power tools, improper installation, an overloaded circuit, excessive lengths of temporary wiring, and long extension cords. To avoid having a GFCI trip, inspect electric tools for damage before you use them and avoid working in wet or damp areas. And if it does trip, don't be irritated—be glad you weren't shocked!

According to OSHA, electrical shock is one of the leading causes of construction accidents. It only takes a small amount of electric current (50 milliamperes) to cause ventricular fibrillation of the heart. No one wants to be an electrocution statistic or worse yet, a fatality.

### SAFETY REMINDER

**Make sure electrical tools empower you rather than overpower you.**

#### NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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# Extend Your Knowledge of Extension Cord Safety

As the name suggests, extension cords extend or expand our work area. They provide electricity for construction workers to run portable power tools and equipment where no permanent power sources are available. Extension cords are the umbilical cord of the construction industry. However, they also present tripping, fire, shock, and electrocution hazards when improperly used.

Keep these safety tips in mind when you use extension cords:

- ✓ Inspect extension cords before each use. They should be free from exposed wiring and any other damage.
- ✓ Never use a defective extension cord. Remove defective cords from service immediately.
- ✓ Use three-wire extension cords with a working grounding conductor.
- ✓ Look for a UL or FM label, which indicates that the cord design has been tested for safety hazards.
- ✓ Make sure cords are rated for hard or extra-hard usage.
- ✓ Ensure that the wire sizes of extension cords can handle the load without heating up.
- ✓ Do not overload extension cords by plugging too many tools into the same cord.
- ✓ Use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) when using extension cords outdoors.

- ✓ Never file or cut the plug blades or grounding pin of a cord so it can plug into a socket.
- ✓ Place extension cords in such a way as to prevent tripping hazards.
- ✓ Do not run extension cords through walls, ceilings, or floors.
- ✓ Never attach extension cords to any surface using nails or staples.
- ✓ Position extension cords away from areas where they may be damaged by vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- ✓ Remember that extension cords are designed for temporary use.
- ✓ Unplug extension cords when they are not in use.

Choose the right cord, inspect it, run it carefully, and then put it away properly. You can avoid tripping, fire, shock, and electrocution hazards associated with extension cords by thinking carefully and then acting safely.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**Teach your children about the dangers of electricity.**  
**Cover unused outlets with safety covers to protect young children from shocks and electrocution.**

**NOTES:**

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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