



Weekly Safety Meetings **Select Edition**

Safety Training for the Construction Industry

with the safety meeting subject line

NOVEMBER 2015

Hazard Communication II

The federal Right-to-Know Law was created to protect workers who are exposed to materials that may be unsafe or harmful to their health. This law states that, as a construction worker, you have a right to know about any hazardous materials in your work area and how to protect yourself and others from danger when you use these materials. Your employer is required to have a written Hazard Communication Program. It will include information on training, the use of labels on containers, a list of all hazardous materials, and material safety data sheets (MSDSs).

Many of the chemicals found on a construction site may cause blindness, lung cancer, skin disorders, liver disease, respiratory problems, brain damage, and birth defects. With certain hazardous chemicals, even a small spill has the potential to kill. To protect yourself from dangers caused by hazardous materials, you must learn how to read and understand MSDSs. They can provide you with all the important information about each chemical you may encounter on the job.

The MSDS for each hazardous material tells you five important things:

1. The name of the chemical and its hazardous ingredients.
2. The chemical's hazards: how the material can harm you and what to do if you need first aid.

3. The conditions that make the material most hazardous and what can happen if you don't use the material safely.

4. How to protect yourself, others, and the environment from the chemical's hazards.

5. How to dispose of the material once you are done using it.

Employers are required to conduct training for all employees who could potentially be exposed to hazardous chemicals on the job site. Employees also need to take responsibility for protecting themselves on a daily basis by understanding the chemicals they work with and recognizing the potential for serious injury and death. You must be trained in hazard communication before you are exposed to or work with any chemical, when new chemicals are introduced into your work environment, and when chemicals or construction operations change. Make sure you get the training you need and then act on that new knowledge.

Know what to do in an emergency that involves a hazardous chemical. Forethought and planning can save your life.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Make sure your MSDS library contains up-to-date information.

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

S.A.F.E. CARDS* PLANNED FOR THIS WEEK:

REVIEWED MSDS #

SUBJECT:

MEETING DOCUMENTATION:

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ATTENDEES:

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NOVEMBER 2015

Slips and Trips

Falls remain the leading cause of death in the construction industry. Workers continue to die as a result of slips, trips, and falls, and too many others suffer disabling injuries. It's important to be aware of the factors that contribute to these slips, trips, and falls, so we can all work to prevent these accidents and injuries on the jobsite.

There are two general types of falls: *same-level falls* and *elevated falls*. Same-level falls include slips and trips; while elevated falls involve falls from ladders, an upper level, scaffolds, falls on stairs, etc. Same-level falls are more frequent on a construction site, though elevated falls are potentially more severe. Today, our safety meeting will focus on samelevel falls and how to prevent them. So let's look at slips and trips.

Slips are caused by slippery surfaces and/or wearing the wrong footwear. They occur when there is not enough traction between a person's foot and a walking surface. Slips usually result in a backward fall. Clean, dry walking surfaces provide the best traction. Wet, icy, muddy, or oily surfaces have low traction and can cause slips. Small items that can roll under your foot, like screws, nails, and short pieces of conduit also cause slips. To prevent slips, avoid walking on slippery surfaces and promptly clean up all spills. Make sure your work boots have slip-resistant soles.

Trips occur when one foot strikes an object and stops suddenly, causing the upper body to be thrown forward. Two

of the most common contributing factors are poor house-keeping and inadequate lighting. Make sure all passageways and walkways are well lit. Keep all walking and working surfaces clear of obstructions. Put trash in trash bins. Place extension cords, power cables, and air hoses away from walkways and doorways. Pick up unused materials or tools. Dispose of scrap and packing materials, especially banding, strapping, and wrap that can entangle your feet.

Although our goal is to prevent falls, knowing *how to fall* may help reduce injuries: Keep your elbows, knees, and wrists bent. Don't try to break your fall with your hands or elbows. Tuck in your chin and protect your head with your arm. It's better to fall on your arm than on your head. If you can, land on your side instead of on your back.

Preventing slips and trips isn't rocket science; it takes a little attention and a little effort. Stay alert as you walk and work on the jobsite. Practice good housekeeping all the time. Watch where you're going and notice what's around you. Ask a co-worker for help when you carry an oversized object that can obstruct your view.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Report all slips, trips, and falls to your supervisor, even if you don't think you suffered any injuries.

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NOVEMBER 2015

Stairways, Aisles, and Walkways

This Weekly Safety Meeting addresses the hazards that can be found on stairways, in aisles, and on walkways. It is important to keep each of these passages safe and free from hazards that may cause slips, trips, and falls that can result in serious injuries.

Stairways make it easy to move from one level to another. Every flight of stairs with four or more risers must have a standard stair railing or handrails. Both of these provide you with a guide and support when walking up or down. If you trip or lose your balance, you can grab the rail and steady yourself. Standard stair railing should be installed at no more than 34 inches and no less than 30 inches from the top of the stair tread. Make it a practice to hold on to rails every time you go up or down a flight of stairs. Stairways require extra vigilance because a small stumble can cause a fall to the lower level.

Aisles are designated passageways within buildings. They provide us with a path to walk on and pass through from one area to another. You never know when someone is going to be passing by with an obstructed view, carrying materials, with their hands full. Avoid accidents and injuries by keeping the aisles clear. Keep them free from clutter, skate hazards, and protruding objects. Be especially careful in high-traffic areas.

Walkways are passageways linking different parts of a building or structure; they separate pedestrians from machinery, traffic, and other hazards. They are typically found leading from office trailers to parking lots, from parking lots to clock alleys, and from clock alleys to tool rooms. These also need to be maintained; keep them free from tripping hazards. In the winter months, they need to be kept free from snow, ice, and water. When laying out a job, look for areas to put walkways. Try to keep them out of high-traffic areas. Be sure they are easily identified. Many projects utilize Jersey barriers to separate designated walkways from other traffic.

Slips, trips, and falls cause thousands of injuries every year, don't be the next victim. Don't create tripping hazards; pick up scrap, clean up spills, and run cords and hoses with care. Second, eliminate these hazards when you see them. Finally, watch where you're going, slow down at blind corners, and use handrails on stairs and ramps.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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At home, teach your children to keep skateboards, toys, and balls off the stairs, and out of the way.

Falls are the leading cause of accidents at home.

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NOVEMBER 2016

Slips And Spills

It's happened to most of us. You're walking around a jobsite, doing your work, not looking where you're going, and the next thing you know, you're flat on your back because you slipped on something. If you were in a lot of pain, you probably called for help. But if it was a minor slip, you probably looked up, embarrassed, wondering if anyone was looking, dusted yourself off, and moved on. Often, workers don't report these incidents, so no one discusses how to avoid them. Instead of ignoring the problem, we should focus on preventing and reducing slips that can lead to injuries.

Slips occur when a person's upper body is not adequately positioned over the lower body. Various factors can contribute to a slip: environmental factors can include slippery floors, worn shoes, and water or oil spills on floors; human factors include inattention, poor or obstructed vision, and inadequate lighting. All of these hazards can be controlled to prevent accidents that could lead to serious injuries.

Spills of any kind—oil, water, dirt, grease, or any other materials—should be cleaned up and disposed of immediately. When you see a spill, clean it up, even if you didn't create it. Whenever possible, correct the source of the hazard. Do your part by keeping your work area free from slipping hazards. Use funnels when dispensing petroleum

products from one container to another. Don't overfill fuel tanks and vessels. Nails, nuts, bolts, and other small, round objects can make your feet skate in one direction while your upper body goes in another direction. To avoid these skate hazards, keep a small bucket in your work area to collect small cutoffs of copper pipe, conduit, and other small objects as you work.

Another important factor in avoiding slips is to keep your eyes on your path. Be observant; watch for objects and materials along your route. Make sure walking surfaces are adequately illuminated. If it's been raining, snowing, or if it's muddy outside, watch your step indoors and outdoors and report slippery surfaces immediately. Watch for signs and cones indicating slip hazards. Wearing appropriate slip-resistant safety footwear can also reduce slips. You can further prevent slips by simply holding on to stair railings as you move up or down a stairway. Should you slip or stumble, you can hold the railing firmly to steady yourself or to get your balance back. When it comes to slips, embarrassment should be the least of your concerns. Think about safety every step of the day.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Medication can also contribute to slips. Read medication labels to see if they can affect your balance or vision.

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