

Safety basics for Habitat for Humanity construction sites

Habitat best practices and OSHA regulations*

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EACH AND EVERY DAY

Begin with a safety talk.

Waiver and liability forms, sign-in sheets, emergency plans, first-aid kits, and safety data sheets should be identified and be accessible to all volunteers.

Hard hats and safety glasses should be worn at all times while working on an active construction site.

No baseball caps or items that will impair the proper fitting of the hard hat should be worn underneath hard hats.



Hard hats and safety glasses

Wear shoes that are in good condition, are close-toed and have good traction. Steel- or composite-toe boots are preferable.

Sandals, flip-flops and bare feet are prohibited. Soft-soled shoes should be worn only where appropriate.



Footwear

Guardrails or personal fall arrest systems must be used when working 6 feet or more above lower levels.

Don't work at any height above 6 feet without using an approved form of fall protection for the job.



Fall protection

Stepladders must be fully opened and on level ground with spreaders locked. Keep your belly button between the side rails and do not step on the top two rungs.

Don't use ladders that are folded up and leaned against walls or that are in poor condition.



Stepladders

Use tools and extension cords that have three prongs or that are double insulated and in good condition. Don't use frayed cords. Keep tools and cords away from water.

Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) or an adapter.



Electrical cords



Extension ladders

A trained Competent Person should be on site to ensure that inspections and setups are performed correctly, and that all work is being done in a safe manner in accordance with Habitat and OSHA job site rules.

An extension ladder's angle should be at a 4-to-1 ratio (i.e., for every 4 feet in height, the ladder should be 1 foot away from the surface it is leaning against). The top should be tied off and extend 3 feet above the roofline. Use according to manufacturer's instructions, and heed electrical wires overhead.

Don't use an incorrect angle. Don't level ladder feet by shimming.



Site housekeeping

Keep supplies stacked neatly, and keep walkways clear of debris and trash. Conduct continual housekeeping sweeps. Cover and mark all holes.

Don't leave nails or other debris on the ground. These create a variety of hazards, including tripping and impalement.



Power tools and personal protective equipment

Use the appropriate personal protective equipment with each tool (safety glasses, hearing protection and masks). Don't cut cement board siding such that silica dust is created.

Don't wear loose-fitting clothing around your neck or loose-fitting gloves while operating power tools.



Scaffolding

Scaffolding should be set up and adjusted by trained individuals and must be plumb, level and square; braced with railings and guards; and installed appropriately.

Don't use scaffolding that has not been inspected by the site's Competent Person.