



Weekly Safety Meetings **Select Edition**

Safety Training for the Construction Industry

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Hudson Bay Insulation Co.

Week of 6/2/2014

Skin Cancer

Many construction tasks involve spending a lot of time out in the sun. Often, you may be exposed to sunlight for 10 to 12 hours a day. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun is the most common cause of skin cancer. The good news is that sun exposure is also easily preventable. In previous Safety Meetings, we have addressed other health problems associated with working in the sun. Today we'll address skin cancer and what you can do to reduce your risk of developing it.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. It's defined as an uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the skin. Melanoma is cancer that forms in cells that make pigment. It is the least common but also the most dangerous type of skin cancer. Melanomas appear most often on the upper back, head, and neck. Skin cancer can also develop on the surface of the skin (squamous cells) or on the layers just beneath the outer layer (basal cells).

Basal cell skin cancer grows slowly and usually occurs on areas of the skin that have been exposed to the sun. It is most common on the face. This type of cancer rarely spreads to other parts of the body. Squamous cell skin cancer also occurs on parts of the body that have been in the sun, but it can also occur in areas that are not exposed to the sun. It sometimes spreads to lymph nodes and organs inside the body.

Skin cancer can almost always be cured if it's detected and treated early. Check your skin regularly for any unusual

changes. Pay attention to any spot on your skin that changes size, shape, or color. Danger signs of skin cancer include any sore or skin patch that doesn't heal properly or that looks crater-like with crusty or pearly skin. If anything seems unusual, visit your doctor as soon as possible.

Learn to protect yourself from skin-damaging exposure to the sun. Wear clothes that cover as much of your skin as possible to provide a physical barrier from UV rays. Wear a full-brim hard hat to protect your face and neck from the sun. Wear sunscreen daily. Be sure to use sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher and a lip balm with an SPF of 15 or higher. Don't forget to put sunscreen on your ears, neck, forearms, and both hands. Ideally, you should reapply sunscreen every two hours. Try to take your breaks and eat lunch in a shaded area.

For more skin cancer information, visit the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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During weekends, holidays, and vacations, protect yourself and your family from the damaging effects of the sun.

It's never too soon to teach young children about sun protection.

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Week of 6/9/2014

Preventing Back Injuries

Perhaps more than any other occupation, construction work puts a hefty burden on your back. You use your back for tasks such as lifting, bending, pushing, and pulling. All of these repeated activities increase your risk of suffering a back injury.

Back injuries and back pain can make your job difficult, unbearable, or even impossible. You must take on the responsibility of preventing back injuries because your safety and livelihood demand that you maintain a healthy back. The good news is that back injuries are preventable.

Most of the time, you hear about proper lifting techniques as the method of preventing back injuries. This practice involves letting your legs do the lifting, keeping the object close to your body, and avoiding unnecessary lifting by using mechanical devices. In addition to these, there are other tactics that can help you prevent back injuries.

Improve Your Posture: Poor posture places a lot of stress on your back. Slouching or rounding your shoulders can lead to muscle fatigue and injury. Proper posture keeps your muscles more relaxed. Years of bad posture can also lead to a weakened spine. Get in the habit of holding in your stomach to improve your posture and to avoid putting excess pressure on your spine. Stand and sit in an upright position to keep your body in proper balance.

Standing Posture: When you stand for long periods, prop

one foot up a little to reduce the stress to your lower back. Change your position often and take mini-breaks to stretch or move around. Maintain proper posture, and try not to bend forward to do your work. Whenever possible keep your work between elbow and shoulder level.

Sleeping Posture: A proper sleeping posture is also essential to preventing back injuries. Sleep on a firm mattress— not a hard mattress nor a sagging one. Avoid sleeping on your stomach. Try to sleep on your side (with a pillow between your knees) or on your back (with a pillow under your knees).

Exercise: Aerobic exercise can strengthen and stretch muscles in your stomach and back. Walking, stationary biking, and swimming can improve blood flow to the spine. Losing weight also reduces stress on your back.

Emotional Stress: Stress can lead to muscle tension and back pain. Manage your stress at home and at work by taking walks or with deep-breathing exercises. You can even try yoga or a massage to help you relax.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Know your limits and listen to your body!

If you feel back pain, stop the activity that aggravates it. Report all injuries to your supervisor right away.

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Week of 6/16/2014

Noise and Your Hearing

Noise levels around a construction site can be hazardous and, too often, lead to noise-induced hearing loss. Every day, construction workers are exposed to noise from equipment, tools, roadway traffic, and other construction activities. Depending on exposure levels, hearing loss can occur over several hours or several years. OSHA standards mandate that employee exposure be limited to a maximum of 90 decibels (dB) of noise over an 8-hour period. One key to protecting and preserving your hearing is being aware of hazardous noise levels. If you're not sure what 90 decibels sounds like, consider this list of typical noise levels including some common construction tools and activities:

quiet office	40 dBA
normal conversation	65 dBA
heavy traffic	78 dBA
garbage disposal (from 3 ft. away)	80 dBA
front-end loader	90 dBA
crane	93 dBA
bulldozer	94 dBA
jackhammer	106 dBA
chainsaw	118 dBA

For every increase of 10 dB, the noise sounds twice as loud; so a front-end loader at 90 dB sounds about twice as loud as a garbage disposal at 80 dB. One rule of thumb for noise exposure is: If you have to raise your voice to be heard by a coworker who is standing next to you, then the noise level is

probably hazardous. But don't take any chances. Here are three methods for controlling noise:

- 1. Reduce the amount of noise released at the source:** by enclosing sources, adding vibration-absorbing pads, or using mufflers.
- 2. Reduce noise by changing the path between the source and the ear:** by increasing the distance from the source, closing doors and windows, or moving to the other side of a building or a wall.
- 3. Reduce the noise to the ear:** by using personal protective equipment such as earplugs or earmuffs, or through job rotation.

All hearing protectors are required to carry a noise-reduction rating (NRR). Higher NRR values mean better protection. The actual noise reduction is dependent on a variety of factors including the frequency (or pitch) of the noise, how the hearing protection fits, and whether it is being worn properly and consistently. Hearing loss is completely preventable through a combination of quieter equipment, comprehensive hearing conservation programs including noise monitoring, and comfortable hearing protection.

SAFETY REMINDER

Hearing loss isn't reversible, but it is preventable!

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Week of 6/23/2014

Guardrails

A fall protection system is a set of procedures and equipment that work together to protect you from falls. Most fall protection systems either:

- prevent falls—restraining workers to keep them from falling, or
- arrest falls—safely stopping workers who are falling.

Guardrails are restraint systems that prevent falls. Such systems consist of top rails, mid rails, toeboards, and intermediate structural members. Guardrail systems prevent workers from falling into holes and over unprotected sides and edges. They also keep objects from dropping to lower levels causing "struck-by" injuries.

Guardrails are used when you need to be protected from whatever lies beyond the rail. They are installed at edges where you could fall six feet or more. They are also used if you could fall less than six feet but there is dangerous equipment below. They are used to prevent falls and stumbles when the edge of a surface or walkway is not easily visible. Guardrails can be found at the edges of floors and roofs, around holes in floors, guarding openings for skylights, and around excavations.

Here are some construction and performance criteria for guardrails:

- Guardrail systems must be free of anything that might cut a worker or snag a worker's clothing.
- The top edge of a guardrail system must be between 39 and 45 inches above the surface.
- If wire rope is used for top rails, it has to be at least ¼ inch in diameter and it must be marked with high-visibility material at intervals of six feet or less.
- The guardrail system must be able to withstand a 200-pound force, applied within two inches of its top edge, in both outward and downward directions.

Remember that guardrails and stair rails have different requirements. Stair rails cannot be used as guardrails. For more information on guardrails check OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.502(b).

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Guardrail systems are not usually designed to be tie-off points for fall arrest systems.

Do not use them for this purpose!

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Week of 6/30/2014

Hand Tools and Power Tools

In the construction industry, your tools help you make a living. But all tools, whether they're powered by your hands, electricity, air, or gasoline, can present hazards when they are not used and maintained properly. To avoid hazards associated with using hand and power tools, you must understand the risks associated with each tool and know the safety precautions necessary to prevent accidents and injuries.

Before you use any tool, you must consider what personal protective equipment is necessary. Tools may produce loud noise, vibration, harmful dust; or chips, sparks, and flying particles during use. Wear all the required personal protective equipment including face and eye protection, earplugs, and respirators when necessary. Use gloves to protect your hands and fingers from rough objects and sharp edges. Remember to remove anything that could get caught in moving parts, including rings, watches, bracelets, and loose clothing.

Inspect every tool before each use. Check hand tools for loose, split, or cracked handles, mushroomed heads, wornout parts or any sign of damage. Inspect power tools for defective cords, plugs, and switches. Never use damaged or defective tools. Remove them from service immediately.

Follow these safe work practices anytime you use tools:

- Use the right tool for the job.
- Don't use a screwdriver as a punch, chisel, or prybar.

- Keep sharp edges pointed away from your body.
- Never disable or remove guards.
- Don't use electric power tools in damp or wet areas.
- Never carry a power tool by the cord or hose.
- Use gasoline-powered tools away from fire hazards.
- Secure materials you're working on.
- Maintain proper footing and balance at all times.
- Disconnect the power when tools are not in use.
- Never carry hand tools in your pockets.
- Carry power tools with your hands off the power switch.
- Use both hands when operating a tool.
- Keep bystanders at a safe distance.
- Make sure work areas have plenty of light.
- Never point pneumatic or power tools at anyone.

It's also important to store and maintain tools properly. Keep tools clean and dry. Follow all of the manufacturers' recommendations for cleaning, maintenance, and storage.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Good maintenance keeps your tools sharp. Regular training keeps you sharp.

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