

# To The Point About Construction Safety FACT SHEET

**LENGTH: 11 MINUTES**

**Production Year: 2023**

## **PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:**

Working on a construction site can be very dangerous and poses serious hazards that kill and injure many construction workers each year. Maintaining hazard awareness while on the jobsite can prevent these types of incidents and save lives. This program describes a variety of basic construction dangers and the safe work practices that can be used to avoid an injury.

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

After watching the program, the participant should be able to explain the following:

- Using hazard awareness on the jobsite;
- The importance of PPE;
- The different types of fall hazards;
- Safe use of ladders and scaffolds;
- Electrical hazards;
- The dangers of heavy mobile equipment.

## **PROGRAM OUTLINE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- A construction jobsite site is an ever-changing workplace: a workplace full of hazards that can hurt us, make us ill, or kill us.
- Controlling these hazards and keeping construction workers safe is the point of a jobsite safety and health program, and that is the point of this program.
- So, pay close attention as we get to the point about construction safety.

### **HAZARD AWARENESS**

- Construction safety starts with awareness, specifically hazard awareness. This is the point of the pre-job safety briefing that is required on many worksites.
- Involved workers discuss each step of the planned work and learn about any potential hazards they may encounter. Then, a work plan is created which includes the specific methods to be used to control the hazards and reduce the likelihood of injury.

### **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

- Even when working alone, taking a moment to think each task through and considering how to do it safely is critical for construction workers to avoid injury. And one of the primary items to consider is "PPE" or Personal Protective Equipment.
- Construction workers should make it a point to wear a minimum level of PPE at all times. Safety boots with a reinforced toe box, long pants, safety glasses, and a hard hat are typically required on every safety-minded job site.
- Also commonly required is a high-visibility shirt or vest, which helps workers be visible to equipment and vehicle operators.
- On a construction site, incidents can happen in the blink of an eye, and wearing PPE can prevent serious injury when the unexpected happens.
- When performing certain tasks, like grinding or cutting masonry, a face shield should be worn for protection against flying debris. Always make a point of wearing safety glasses under the face shield. A face shield should never be worn alone.
- Hearing protection should be used when operating loud power tools or equipment. Exposure to high noise levels over time can cause permanent damage to our hearing.

- Make a point of protecting your hands also. Keep a pair of gloves with you and put them on before handling objects that may cause injury.
- Put on your PPE when you first arrive on the jobsite and keep it on all day. Wearing PPE must become a habit, because PPE does absolutely no good if you're not wearing it.

## **FALLS**

- Falls are one of the leading causes of construction-related injuries and fatalities.
- There are two types of falls: same-level falls and falls from height.
- Same-level trips and falls can result in serious injury. Avoid this by scanning your planned path of travel for trip and fall hazards. These hazards always exist on a construction site, and workers must slowly and carefully navigate around them as they travel.
- Pay particular attention to the edges of poured concrete, holes, trenches, stubbed up pipe, and job debris.
- Practicing good housekeeping eliminates many trip and fall hazards.
- Protect others from trip hazards by cleaning up job waste as you work, avoiding running cords across travel paths whenever possible, and not storing job materials in common walkways and travel paths.

## **LADDERS AND SCAFFOLDS**

- Unfortunately, falls from height are often fatal for construction workers. This is why extreme caution must be used when performing work from ladders and scaffolds.
- Make a point to inspect all ladders prior to use and make sure they are erected on firm level ground.
- When used to access another level, extension ladders must be tied off securely and extend 3 feet above the level being accessed.
- When working from a ladder, keep your body between the side rails and do not stand on the top step of a step ladder.
- Before using a scaffold, make sure it is fully assembled and safe to use. On many job sites, a system of colored tags is used to indicate a scaffold's condition.
- Typically, a green inspection tag will indicate that a scaffold has been inspected and is fully assembled, while a red tag indicates that a scaffold should not be used.
- The working level of a scaffold must be fully decked with approved planking that is in good condition. The working level of a scaffold also requires that fall protection in the form of top rails and mid rails be installed on all open sides.
- Always use the scaffold's ladder to access the scaffold. Never climb onto the cross braces.
- Three-point contact refers to a ladder-climbing method where three points of contact are maintained with the ladder at all times. This technique is often misunderstood.
- A person is not maintaining three points of contact while climbing if one hand and one foot are off the ladder at the same time. One slip can easily result in a fall.
- One form of three-point contact is securely placing both hands on a rung before moving a foot and then ensuring both feet are securely placed onto a rung before moving a hand. This results in two feet and one hand, or two hands and one foot being securely on the ladder at all times.
- Make a point of using three-point contact any time you climb or descend a ladder.
- Also use three-point contact when climbing into or out of heavy equipment to prevent falling.

## **BE AWARE AROUND YOU**

- Always be on the lookout for unguarded edges and floor openings and keep well clear. Be aware that flag lines are often used to provide a warning to the presence of an unguarded roof edge. Never cross this type of warning line without the use of a personal fall arrest system or other means of fall protection.
- Avoid placing yourself under raised loads, raised equipment, or directly under ladders or scaffolds when overhead work is being performed.
- By staying alert to what's going on around you, you can avoid being struck and injured by falling objects.

## **ELECTRICAL HAZARDS**

- Overhead power lines present an extreme danger because electricity can arc thru the air and energize conductive objects or vehicles even when no direct contact is made.

- This is why all vehicles and conductive objects must stay at least 10 feet away from overhead electrical lines up to 50,000 Volts, and higher voltages require even more distance be maintained.
- Make a point of looking around the job site and locating any overhead power lines.
- Of course, power lines and other utilities can also be underground and must be properly located and marked before any digging takes place.
- Power tools and extension cords are also a source of electrical hazard.
- To prevent electric shock, inspect all tools and cords prior to use. Make sure the insulation is not damaged.
- If the cord is designed to have a ground pin, make sure it is in place and in good condition.
- In addition, electric cords should be plugged into a ground fault-protected circuit, or a portable GFCI should be installed between the cord and the plug.

### **HAZARDS OF HEAVY MOBILE EQUIPMENT**

- There are many hazards associated with heavy mobile equipment.
- It's important to understand that no one may operate any type of mobile equipment unless they are trained and authorized by their employer to do so.
- Being run over by moving equipment is a real danger on a construction site. Make it a point to never stand directly behind these types of vehicles where the operator cannot see you.
- Never approach or cross paths with moving equipment unless you make eye contact with the operator, and they indicate it is safe to do so.
- Be aware of the swing radius of this type of equipment and any load they may be carrying. Always stay clear of this hazardous area.

### **TRENCHES AND EXCAVATIONS**

- Trenches and excavations present many dangers.
- The primary hazard faced by workers in a trench is the risk of a cave-in or collapse. This is why all excavations are overseen by a competent person. The competent person will ensure that protections such as sloping, shoring, or shielding are in place to prevent a cave-in.
- Never enter a trench or excavation unless you are sure it has been made safe and is under the supervision of a competent person.

### **CONCLUSION**

- In this program, we have discussed some common hazards found on a construction jobsite and how workers can control those hazards to reduce the risk of injury.
- Recall that hazard awareness is the key to construction safety, and each worker has a responsibility to determine the hazards of their planned work and follow the safe work practices required to prevent injury.
- After all, preventing injuries is the point of our safety and health program, which is why you must always make it a point to be safe.