



**Habitat
for Humanity®**

North Central Massachusetts

Construction Safety Guide



Introduction

Thanks for reading NCM Habitat's Construction Safety Guide. The construction supervisor on a Habitat worksite will instruct everyone on how to work safely on any task that is being performed for the day, however this information is helpful to go over for your own reference and so you can personally help promote a safe working atmosphere among the volunteers. Remember that if at any time during a workday you are unclear on how to perform a task, or feel uncomfortable performing a task, you should inform the supervisor. The supervisor will not pressure you to do anything that you feel uncomfortable doing.

When First Arriving

Upon arrival, you will be asked to fill out a sign-in sheet and, if this is your first time volunteering with NCM Habitat this year, a waiver form. Please be sure to fill in the emergency contact information on the waiver form.

All volunteers should know the location of the first aid kit and the address of the site where they are working. Also, if you hold CPR certification and would be willing to perform it, please inform the supervisor at the beginning of the day.

If There Is A Minor Injury

Attend to your injury or find someone to attend to it, and then notify the site supervisor.

If There Is A Serious Injury

If a person on the site is seriously injured, immediately call for the supervisor and have somebody call 911.

For All Incidents

If you witness an incident, we ask for your cooperation in filling out an Incident Report Form so that we may have as accurate information as possible for what occurred.

Other Important Advice & Information

- Remind yourself of your own physical capabilities, and do not over exert yourself. You are more likely to have accidents when you are straining yourself or fatigued.
- On hot days, make sure that you drink plenty of liquids, especially water, to avoid heat stroke and heat exhaustion.
- On cold days, make sure that you are dressed appropriately and you avoid over exertion.
- If there is snow or ice around the site, show extra caution while walking and carrying heavy items
- HFHNCM does not allow volunteers under the age of 18 to use power tools

Maintaining a Clean Worksite

A clean work place is a safe work place. Supervisors will work to ensure that a worksite is kept tidy, but as a day progresses it is important that each volunteer do their part to keep the site tidy to reduce safety hazards. Position building materials and supplies in carefully laid out piles to allow adequate aisles and walkways. Clean up all debris and scrap materials. Do not permit blocks of wood, nails, bolts, empty cans, pipe, wire or other materials to accumulate on the work site. They interfere with work and can constitute a hazard.

For All Tools and Materials

Be mindful for defects with any tools or materials you are using while on the worksite. Habitat inspects the equipment used to ensure it is in proper working condition, but equipment may wear, tear, and break during the course of a workday.

Hand Tools

Always select the correct type and size of tool for your work and be sure it is sharp and properly adjusted. Guard against using any tool if the handle is loose or in poor condition. Dull tools are hazardous to use because excessive force must be used to make them cut. Oil or dirt on a tool may cause it to slip and cause an injury. When using tools, hold them correctly and ask a supervisor if you are unsure. Anyone working with a hammer at a height should wear a hammer loop or tool belt, and when not in use, the hammer should be kept in the loop or belt and not placed on a sloping surface or other precarious position. Do not carry sharp tools in your pockets. When not in use, tools should be stowed away from where people are walking and working.

Power Tools and Other Electrical Equipment

You will be instructed on the proper use of all power tools before using them. If you feel uncomfortable using a power tool, inform your supervisor so that you can perform a different task.

Never lower or carry a power tool by its cord. If you notice a defect on a tool or that it is dull, you should inform your supervisor; do not wait until the end of the day.

To avoid electrical shock, obey the following cautions:

- A three-pronged plug must be used on all electric power tools
- Extension cords must not have frayed insulation or be fastened with staples, hung from nails or suspended from wires
- Do not drape or lay a cord over a wet area.
- Keep cords away from saws and power tools.

Ladders

Use a ladder that will reach the work. An extension ladder should reach three feet above the work level. Move your ladder with your work. If, while you are working, both of your shoulders are extended outside the ladder, you are reaching too far. When using an extension ladder, use the “four-to-one” rule: for every four feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder one foot away from the wall. Place your ladder on solid footing. If there is a danger of the ladder moving while you work, tie it down. If there is a danger that the ladder will be hit, barricade it. Never use an aluminum ladder in the vicinity of electrical lines. Carry tools and materials in proper carrying devices and keep your hands free for climbing. When climbing, always face the ladder.

Cutting

Support what you are working on properly. Never attempt to cut something that could tilt or fall and cause the saw to slip. Cut away from you, not toward you.

Scaffolding

Extra care should be taken when working on scaffolding. Persons uncomfortable with heights should not work on scaffolding. Never walk backward on a scaffold; this can cause loss of balance and falls. Do not set out tools and materials on scaffolding as they may fall onto someone below.

Proper Safety Equipment

Proper clothing is as essential to safety as the proper selection and use of tools. Wear clothes and gloves that are appropriate for the work and weather conditions. Loose clothing is dangerous around power tools. Workers are strongly encouraged to wear work boots at all times when on a construction site. Do not wear sandals or loose-fitting shoes while on the construction site. Habitat also implements the following precautions:

- Hard hats are worn while doing demolition work or during the framing phase of construction, or while any overhead work is being performed.
- A worker will wear protective glasses any time they are operating a power tool or when instructed by a supervisor.
- Each worker must wear a dust mask when installing insulation, sanding, or when instructed by a supervisor. Ear plugs must be worn when using a power tool for a prolonged period of time or when instructed by a supervisor.

Flammables

Flammables may be solid, liquid or gas. Do not use or store flammables near open flame or hot areas. Do not store wood, cardboard or paper near heaters. Do not cut or grind metal near wood shavings. Do not store kerosene, gasoline, or other flammable liquids near heaters or in direct sunlight. Do not store propane tanks near heaters

Poisons and Toxic Substances

Special care must be taken when you come in contact with any poisonous or unfamiliar substance. While doing any work that involves wearing a mask, make sure that the mask is tightly worn at all times. NCM Habitat adheres to all safety regulations concerning poisonous and toxic substance, and untrained volunteers will not perform any work that requires a license.

Finally, Consider the Safety of Everyone

On top of these valuable safety habits, we ask that you note the safety of other people on the site. If another volunteer looks to be in an unsafe situation, we ask that you alert and assist them. Together, the volunteers can help make the construction site a safe, fun, and meaningful experience while serving the community. As a final reminder, a best guess or assumption is no substitute for asking a supervisor for clarification on any concern you have. Thanks for taking the time to read this guide!