



# Safety Manual For Work Site Volunteers

1. **FOREWORD:** Habitat for Humanity exists to provide safe, decent, affordable housing to families. In pursuit of this goal, we are also committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all workers on our job sites.

Our guidelines for achieving a safe and healthy workplace are standards published under the Washington Industrial Safety and Health act of 1973, specifically:

- WAC 296-155, Safety Standards for Construction Work
- WAC 296-24, General Safety and Health Standards
- WAC 296-800, Core Rules

Habitat for Humanity of Grays Harbor shall designate Construction Supervisors. These Supervisors shall supervise and enforce:

- A safe and healthy working environment
- An accident prevention program
- Training programs which improve the skill and competency of workers in workplace safety and health

Each worker shall be familiar with and shall comply with the following (*see WAC 296-155-105*):

- Coordinate and cooperate with all other workers to eliminate accidents
- Study and observe all safety rules governing the work to be performed (that is, this Safety Manual)
- Use proper safety devices and personal protective equipment
- Take proper care of personal protective equipment
- Immediately report any work-related injury or illness to a Construction Supervisor
- Follow all instructions of the Construction Supervisor

2. **INTRODUCTION:** Building construction is an extremely hazardous occupation. The type of work being done, the tools used and the nature of the job site all combine to produce well-above average rates of injury and disability among construction workers.

All construction site injuries are avoidable! Those events we call “accidents” are the results of holes we have in our knowledge, skills or attitudes. All volunteers must take responsibility to anticipate any potential safety risks and eliminate those problems before an injury occurs.

3. **GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE ATTITUDE:** Be safe – don’t rush!! We are not in a hurry. We have no reason to ever compromise safety!! Take your time and be cautious!!
- Before you begin a task, look around the site. Think about what’s going to be involved.
  - If you are uncertain about how to do a task, or how to use one of the tools involved, ask the Construction Supervisor.
  - Ensure the area in which you are going to work does not present any safety hazards: piles of materials, uneven footings for ladders or scaffold, things that could fall on your head.
  - Never step or walk on floor decking or roof sheathing that has not been securely nailed down. The potential for serious injury is extremely high.
  - Inspect all power cords and tools, hand tools, ladders and scaffolding before using them.

Be a conscious observer of other people’s safety as well. A worker involved in a task very often overlooks hazards that are obvious to an observer. Take a minute to imagine how badly you’d feel if the person working next to you took a bad fall or had a finger amputated.

Never be embarrassed to ask a question.

If you think something may be unsafe, report it to the Construction Supervisor. Don’t be afraid to be thought of as overcautious – that has never been a problem.

4. **GENERAL SAFETY POLICIES:**
- a. Safety Orientation – Prior to working on any construction project for Habitat for Humanity, each volunteer must read the contents of this booklet and sign the acknowledgment form on the last page. The form is to be turned into the Volunteer Coordinator or the Construction Supervisor before the volunteer begins working.
  - b. Sign-in Sheet – Industrial insurance requires that each person working on site enter their name, time begun and time ended on the sign-in sheet each day that they work. Check with the Volunteer Coordinator or Construction Supervisor for the sign-in sheet.
  - c. Proper Clothing – Appropriate clothing is as essential to safety as the proper selection and use of tools. Proper clothing will protect you against scratches,

abrasions, slivers, sunburn and similar hazards. By law, shorts are not acceptable; long pants must be worn. Shirts must be worn at all times. Short-sleeved shirts are acceptable. Loose or ragged clothing is particularly dangerous around power tools and when working on ladders.

- d. Footwear – By law, you must wear substantial footwear – shoes made from leather or other equally firm material. Athletic shoes are not acceptable unless working on a roof.
  - e. Hard Hats – Hard hats are mandatory whenever there is a possibility of flying or falling objects. For example, anytime you are working near the eaves of a house and people are working on the roof above you. Habitat will have hard hats available for you to wear. Again, this is an area where serious injury can occur. Please follow the guidelines above!
  - f. Eye Protection – Eye protection will be worn while operating a power tool, when hammering or at any time the Construction Supervisor directs you to use eye protection. If you or anyone around you is pounding nails, you should wear eye protection, as “ricochets” are very common.
  - g. Ear Protection – Ear protection should be worn when operating power saws or at any other time a high noise level is being generated. We will always have a supply of earplugs on site.
  - h. Dust Masks – Dust masks should be worn when sanding wood or sheetrock seams. You should also try to get as much ventilation as practical when sanding or creating other dust.
  - i. Lifting – Improper lifting causes the greatest number of workplace injuries. The simple habit of keeping your back as straight as possible (avoid bending at the waist) while making your legs do most of the work can reduce the strain on your lower back by as much as 75%. It’s also very important to have the weight being lifted as close to your body as practical. (With so many volunteers, why try to lift something heavy by yourself?)
  - j. Children – No volunteers under the age of 16 are allowed in the construction area of the worksite. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a form signed by one of their parents authorizing the Affiliate to obtain emergency medical treatment for the minor if it becomes necessary.
  - k. Emergencies – In the event of any emergency (fire for example) ensure your co-workers are alerted and then evacuate the site to a safe distance. Help the Construction Supervisor account for all the workers. Ensure the responding emergency vehicles and personnel will have unrestricted access by moving your own vehicle if necessary.
5. EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE: Any injuries, no matter how seemingly minor, must be reported to the Construction Supervisor and must be treated as soon as possible.
- For minor injuries, a first aid kit is kept on site.
  - For anything more serious, emergency medical help must be called immediately or the worker should be taken to the nearest Emergency Room/Medical Facility.

- An Accident/Biohazard Exposure form must be completed by the worker and the Construction Supervisor for any accident, incident or even “close call.” This helps Habitat determine the most common sources of injury on job sites so that preventative measures can be implemented.
6. HOUSEKEEPING: A clean, well-arranged work site is a much safer place to work. Since we are all unpaid volunteers, there is no reason why we can’t take the time to keep our workplace a safe one.
- Keep hallways, aisles and walkways clear.
  - Put all scrap materials and rubbish either on scrap piles which are out of the way or in appropriate containers.
  - When you pull off a board with nails in it, take the time to pull the nails out.
  - Keep tools and equipment which are not being used in toolboxes or in the storage shed. This protects both the tools and the workers.
  - Any holes in the floor or other walking surface must be guarded or covered to keep people from tripping on them or falling into them.
  - Where electrical cords and water hoses cross aisles or doorways they should be either covered or suspended.
7. POWER TOOLS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:
- Never use a power tool that you haven’t been trained to use.
  - All power tools must be in good, safe working condition. They should be checked daily for proper grounding and defective switches, cords and plugs.
  - In order to prevent electrical shock, the following rules must be observed:
    - Electrical cords that are worn, frayed or cut shall not be used.
    - Extension cords shall not be hung from nails or suspended by metal wire.
    - All temporary lights must have non-conductive guards.
  - A tool should not be used without permission from its owner. Owners must be responsible for the condition of their own power tools. Power tools should not be loaned to people who aren’t competent in their use.
8. A SPECIAL WORD ON SAWS: On any kind of power saw make sure the guard is in place and fully operational. Before connecting a saw to a power supply, check the guard by hand ensuring that it springs back into position by itself. Be aware that the springs in spring-actuated guards can stretch and wear so the return is slow. These are no longer safe. Power saws without guards will not be permitted on site. If they are brought on site, they will be removed.
- Always keep your hands and fingers well away from the blade of a saw.
  - Unplug saws to carry them, change blades or make depth-of-cut adjustments.

- Do not try to cut small pieces of wood on a circular saw or chop saw. It's too dangerous!
- Let the blade get up to speed before making contact with the wood. Do not hold the saw against the wood then start it – the saw will jam and jerk out of your hand.
- If anything gets jammed in a saw, unplug the saw before trying to clear the jam!
- When using a circular saw, set the depth of cut so you only have the necessary amount of blade exposed. It should NOT extend more than one-eighth of an inch beyond the wood being cut.
- When cutting long panels, the blade can bind and cause a very dangerous kickback. Small wood wedges or shims can spread and maintain the saw cut as you go along.
- Always have the material and saw on a firm surface. Never try to cut something that could tilt or fall and cause the saw to slip. Never, ever use your leg as a sawhorse!
- Never try to “steer” a circular saw. This is an extremely unsafe condition and can cause the saw to kickback and injure someone.

9. HAND TOOLS:

- Select the right kind and the right size tool for the job.
- Do not use a dull tool for a cutting job. Dull tools are hazardous because they require excessive force to make them cut; this means they slip more often.
- Do not use a tool with a loose handle or other defect.
- Handle and carry tools with care. Carry only a few tools at a time; use a toolbox or other container or a tool belt. Do not carry edged or pointed tools in your pocket.
- Stand tools up such as shovels and rakes when not using them or lay them down with the point or tines down.

10. EXTENSION LADDERS: Ladders can be extremely hazardous when not set properly. Both feet of the ladder must be on a substantial and level base, not on moveable objects. The feet of the ladder must be set so they won't slip backwards. If the rubberized footings are not enough to make them safe, the base may be staked down or blocked. Use the four-to-one rule: for every four feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder one foot away from the wall. Ensure the ladder is set to a sufficient height. An extension ladder should reach three feet beyond the work level. If it is being used to gain access to a roof or an upstairs floor, it should reach three feet beyond the walking surface. When practical, ladders should be tied at or near the top.
- Be careful when going up or down a ladder. No more than one person on a ladder at any time. Always face the ladder when ascending or descending. Do not carry tools or materials that will interfere with the use of both of your hands.

11. **STEPLADDERS:** Before using a stepladder, check it out for any defects. Remember, we are not in a hurry. Neither the top nor the top step of a stepladder is a safe step. If you need to go higher, get a taller ladder! The cross bracing on the back of the ladder is not meant to be used for climbing. Neither is the foldout platform on the back of the ladder meant for you to stand on. Do not leave tools or materials on the ladder when the ladder is unattended. People may try to move the ladder and get hit on the head by tools/material falling off! When using a stepladder, make sure the legs are fully open. Never lean a stepladder against a wall to use as if it were a straight ladder. Always face the ladder when ascending or descending.

12. **SCAFFOLDING:** All scaffolding must be erected under the supervision of a competent and experienced person – usually the Construction Supervisor. This includes moving scaffolds from one position to another.

Each leg of a scaffold must be supported by an adequate footing. Loose boards, bricks and other material do not provide a safe, adequate base. Scaffolds should be erected as close to plumb and level as practical; they should not lean perceptibly. Where the working platform is more than four feet off the ground, the scaffold must have guardrails installed. If people are working under the scaffold, tow boards must be used to prevent tools and materials from falling on them.

Workers are not to climb the metal tubular frame of the scaffold to get to the working platform. Other, safer means of access must be used – a ladder or access from the building.

13. **FALL PROTECTION:** Where there is a hazard of falling from a height of ten feet or more, workers must use fall protection. (There is a hazard when the person is within six feet of the edge.) Unless there is an approved scaffold platform with guardrails under the roof edge, fall protection will be a body harness which is properly secured to an anchor point on the roof. When putting on a body harness, you should inspect the condition of the webbing, connectors and adjustments. Have a co-worker inspect it after you put it on to make sure that it is correctly adjusted. Since the insurance requirements state that each person's anchor point must support 5,000 pounds, only one person can be tied off to any single anchor point at a time. Anchor points are the metal brackets supplied in the harness kit; tying a rope around a rafter is not a proper anchor!

As you move from one part of the roof to another, keep adjusting the amount of slack in the restraint line to ensure there is not too much slack. Fall protection systems do not do much good if you fall more than two feet before they stoop you.

14. **HANDLING BLOOD/BODY FLUIDS:** In any medical situation where you may come in contact with blood or body fluids, please follow the procedures listed below:

- If possible have the injured person treat him/herself.
- If you must provide medical assistance use personal protective equipment such as gloves, eye shield and mask. This equipment is available in a Bio-Hazard Kit available at the site.
- Once the person has received medical attention, decontaminate the area by cleaning with straight bleach or a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water. Be sure to wear personal protective equipment while decontaminating the area.
- Dispose of all contaminated clothing and equipment in a garbage bag tied at the top and double bagged. The bag must be taken to a bio-hazard site.
- If you have been exposed to potentially infectious body fluids you should receive a Hepatitis B vaccine.
- Complete an Accident/Bio-Hazard Exposure form and return to the Construction Supervisor.

*(Habitat for Humanity of Grays Harbor gratefully acknowledges use of many portions of the Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity Safety Manual for Work Site Volunteers.)*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Please print)

acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of the Habitat for Humanity of Grays Harbor Safety Manual for Work Site Volunteers. Any questions or concerns I had regarding the contents of this manual have been addressed.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form must be signed, dated and returned to either the Construction Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator before you begin work on one of Habitat's job sites.

Habitat for Humanity of Grays Harbor  
P.O. Box 271  
Aberdeen, WA 98520  
360-533-8090



## EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION

**In case of emergency, please contact:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

**The following information may be needed by hospital/medical staff providing medical care.**

Allergies (medicine/food): \_\_\_\_\_

Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last tetanus shot: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical impairments: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Physician Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_