



# Safety on the Worksites

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## Whose responsibility is it?

**Volunteer leaders** who oversee worksites are ultimately responsible for worksite safety. The staff of Mustard Seeds and Mountains will go over safety issues related to work being done at a particular site, but the volunteer worksite leader is the person who is delegated the responsibility for overseeing safety on the site. **The volunteer worksite leader is the person who is at the worksite throughout the day.** Mustard Seed staff must make material runs, dump runs and assure that other sites have adequate materials. Consequently, unlike the team leader, they are not at one site all day long.

## Begin safety training early.

During training and preparation for coming to Mustard Seeds and Mountains, team leaders are responsible to become familiar with basic worksite safety. Use **THE TEAM SAFETY OVERVIEW** provided in this handout.

## Review safety practices often.

Staff of Mustard Seeds will go over safety issues with the team during the week. **It is the team leader's responsibility to scan the environment for potential unsafe practices or conditions.**

- ✘ **Is the worksite clean so that people can't trip or stumble over debris?**
  - Nails being removed from wood to eliminate punctures
  - Debris being stacked neatly
  - Cords or rope coiled neatly and out of the way
- ✘ **Are the team members following safe personal practices?**
  - Use of goggles, gloves, dust masks, using sun screen, keeping hydrated etc.
  - Lifting properly, getting help to avoid strain
  - Being aware of where they are standing or walking
  - Being careful about dropping tools or debris
  - Using tools properly
  - Insuring proper team work communication
  - Not engaging in horseplay or careless activity on the site
  - Not overextending themselves on ladders or using them improperly
- ✘ **Are team members using tools in a safe manner?**
  - Positioning ladders properly
  - Moving and using scaffolding properly
  - Spotting one another when using ladders
  - Not forcing saws or drills
  - Being careful around electricity
  - Not using tools for tasks for which they were not designed
  - Making sure tools are under control at all times
  - Being aware of power lines when using ladders
- ✘ **Monitor energy levels of team members.** When people begin to get tired, they get careless and unknowingly take shortcuts. More vigilance is needed as the day progresses. A ten minute break can do much to insure safety.

# Team Safety Overview

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## Ladder safety

- ✘ **One person on a ladder at a time.**
- ✘ **Inspect Before You Step** – Inspect the ladder before stepping on the first rung. Make sure the ladder has been well maintained, that the rungs are clean and all parts are intact — never climb on a slippery or shaky ladder.
- ✘ **Make Sure It's Secure** – Setting up the ladder correctly may help prevent falls. When planting the base of any ladder, place all feet on a firm, level surface, not on rocks or boards. Spreaders, the devices that hold the front and back sections of a stepladder in an open position, should be completely open and locked before any weight is placed on the ladder.
- ✘ When using extension ladders, **make sure that all locks are firmly secured.**
- ✘ **Ladder Angle: Don't overdo it** – When using an extension ladder, don't place the ladder at too extreme of an angle. It should not be too close nor too far away.
- ✘ **Look for the UL Mark** – Always look for the familiar UL Mark before purchasing a ladder. This Mark means that representative samples of that product have been tested and meet nationally recognized safety standards.
- ✘ **Size it Right** – Always use a ladder that is tall enough for the job at hand. A great number of ladder accidents are the result of using a ladder that is too short. **Never stand on the ladder's top three rungs.**
- ✘ **Get a Belt or a Helper** – Don't carry equipment while climbing a ladder. Invest in a tool belt or have someone hand the equipment to you.
- ✘ **Face the Ladder** – Face the ladder when climbing up and down; keep your body centered between both side rails.
- ✘ **Don't Get Too Ambitious** – While up on the ladder, **don't overextend your reach.** Make sure you keep your weight evenly distributed.
- ✘ **Never Move a Ladder While Standing On It** - Always make sure people and equipment are off the ladder before moving or closing it.
- ✘ **Never stand on a ladder's bucket shelf.** Read and follow the warning stickers for highest standing levels.
- ✘ **Be aware of electrical lines when working on a ladder.** Do not get within 2 feet of a typical house's main electrical line.

## Scaffold safety

- ✘ **Power lines:** Keep scaffolds 10 feet or more from power lines (or 3 feet, if lines are less than 300 volts), unless you are sure the power lines are de-energized or covered with a rubber blanket.
- ✘ **Weather:** You cannot work on a scaffold in high winds or a storm unless a competent person says it is safe.

### *Guidelines for checking a scaffold*

- ✘ **Egress:** If a scaffold is more than 2 feet above or below a level, there must be a way to get on or off - such as a ladder, ramp, or personnel hoist. The access must not be more than 14" from the scaffold.
- ✘ **Put a standing scaffold on a firm foundation** (with base plates attached to feet) - for instance, with one piece of wood under each pair of legs (across the shortest distance), extending at least 1 foot past each leg.
- ✘ **Uprights must be vertical and braced to prevent swaying.** Platforms must be level.
- ✘ **A scaffold that is more than 4 times higher than its base is wide must be tied to supports.**

- ✘ **Most scaffold platforms and walkways must be 18" wide or more.** If a work area is less than 18" wide, guardrails and/or personal fall-arrest must be used.
- ✘ For supported scaffolds, check at least these points:
  - Completely planked platforms
  - Proper access
  - Proper ties to buildings, where required.
- ✘ A competent person must decide if fall protection is feasible when you assemble a scaffold or take it apart.
- ✘ **On most scaffolds, guard rails must be on all open sides and ends.** On supported scaffolds and some other scaffolds, guardrails or personal fall protection is enough.
- ✘ You do not need a guard rail on the working side when the platform is less than 14" from the work (18" for plastering and lathing). The open side of an outrigger must never be more than 3" from the face of the building.
- ✘ **Scaffold walkways must have no more than a 9.5" gap** between planks and a guardrail.
- ✘ **Don't let junk collect on the scaffold.** You can trip and fall.

## Power tool safety

1. **Safety glasses:** These prevent dust, debris, wood shavings, shards from fiberglass, etc from getting into the eyes. Safety glasses are one of the most basic pieces of safety equipment that must be used when working with power tools.
2. Before plugging *or* unplugging tools, **be sure power switch is turned to "OFF."**
3. **Never disconnect power by pulling on the cord** - remove the plug from the outlet.
4. **Never clean or repair a tool unless power is disconnected** (repair tools only if you are trained to do so).
5. When working on ladders or scaffolding, **rest power tools on a flat surface or in a bin secured to the ladder itself** (a falling tool can seriously injure a coworker or bystander).
6. **Never remove safety mechanisms from power tools** and do not tamper with them.
7. **Knowing the right tools for the job:** It is important to know the right tools for the job in order to avoid injury to oneself and damage to the materials.
8. **Correct method of using tools:** Tools should not be carried by their cords; tools that are not in use should be disconnected; and while handling a tool connected to a power source, fingers should be kept away from the on/off switch.
9. **The right clothes:** Long hair should be tied and loose clothing should be avoided. Ideally, clothing that covers the entire body should be worn and heavy gloves should be used in order to avoid sharp implements and splinters from hurting the hands. Masks prevent inhalation of harmful minute particles of the material that is being worked upon. Steel-toed work boots and hard hats can also be worn.
10. **Tool inspection:** Power tools should not be employed in wet environments and should never be dipped in water; they should be checked periodically for exposed wiring, damaged plugs, and loose plug pins. Nicked cords can be taped but if a cut appears to be deep, a cord should be replaced. Tools that are damaged or those that sound and feel different when used should be checked and repaired.
11. **Cleanliness in the work area:** This should be maintained because accumulated dust particles in the air can ignite with a spark. Of course, flammable liquids should be kept covered and away from the place where power tools are being used. An uncluttered work area also makes it easy to maneuver the power tool; often distractions caused by a tangled cord can result in an accident.
12. **Care with particular tools:** Miter saws and table saws should be used with a quick-release clamp and a wood push-through, respectively. Extra care should be taken while using nail guns and power belt sanders.
13. **Keep tools in place:** Power tools should be returned to their cabinets after use to prevent them from being used by an unauthorized and incapable person.

14. **Lighting:** It is important to use proper lighting while working with power tools, particularly when working in the basement and garage where lighting may not be satisfactory.
15. **Before letting another person use a tool, instruct the person in how to use the tool properly.**

## Hornets, Wasps, and Bees

- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Lookout for nests.
- **Safely using bee spray - do not spray toward people.** Do not try to hit the bugs in the air. Find their nest and spray its entrance or up into the nest. Be sure to saturate the nest at the end of the day.

## Hand tool safety

1. Know the purpose of each tool in your toolbox, and **use each for the specific task it was designed to do.**
2. Never use any tool - hand or power - unless you are trained to do so.
3. **Inspect tools before each use** and replace or repair if worn or damaged.
4. **Clean tools after every use.**
5. **Keep cutting edges sharp.**
6. Never test a cutting edge with your fingers - test on scrap material instead.
7. **Select the right size tool for the job** - don't use cheaters.
8. When working on ladders or scaffolding, **be sure that you and your tools are secure.** (A falling tool can seriously injure a coworker or bystander).
9. **Carry tools correctly** - never put sharp or pointed tools in your pockets.
10. When hand - carrying tools, **point cutting edges away from you,** toward the ground.
11. Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as safety goggles, face shields, gloves
12. **Watch your fingers:** You should take special care when hammering so that you strike not your fingers but the object.
13. Razor blades, saw blades, knife blades should be disposed of in a puncture-resistant sharps container.

## Roof safety

1. **Sweep the roof lightly before you start working** to remove tree debris or anything else you could slip on.
2. For a secure foothold while working on your roof, rent a pair of **roof jacks** from your roofing materials supplier. Slip each jack under a shingle in your work area, and then nail them in place. To make a scaffold, place a 2x6 across the jacks for your foothold. Once you're done, slide the jacks out and hammer the nails in flush with the surface of the roof.
3. On a steep roof, anchor a ladder in place with ladder braces, which hook over the peak of the roof. You can buy these at a building-supply store.
4. To keep your hand tools from sliding off the roof, lay down sheets of the soft plastic foam used as cushioning in packages. They'll grip the roof and hold your tools to prevent them from skidding away from you and possibly falling on someone below. Keep bystanders safely away from the house anyway, just to be safe.
5. **Avoid power lines** as they are not always insulated.

## Lifting safety

### Preparation

- ✘ Ensure that you are wearing proper clothing and PPE
  - Steel toe shoes should always be worn when lifting heavy items
  - Gloves are also recommended when lifting certain objects
- ✘ **Stretch before you attempt to lift a heavy object** or at beginning of shift
- ✘ If possible, **store materials at waist height** to reduce the strain on your back
- ✘ **Have materials delivered as close to final destination** as possible
- ✘ **Assess the object** you are going to be lifting, determine the weight of the object before lifting
- ✘ Determine **best place to grip** the object
- ✘ Ensure that **your travel path is free of slipping and tripping hazards**
- ✘ **Know your own lifting restrictions** and capabilities
- ✘ **Get Help:**
  - Use carts, dollies, forklifts and hoists to move materials
  - When lifting a load more than 50 lbs, get help from another worker
  - Use carrying tools with handles to carry odd-shaped loads

### Proper Lifting Techniques:

- ✘ Have your feet spread about shoulders-width apart.
- ✘ Your feet should be close to the object.
- ✘ Get a firm grip on the object.
- ✘ Keep your back straight and elbows close to your body.
- ✘ Keeping your back straight and head up, straighten your legs to lift object
- ✘ At the same time tighten your stomach muscles to provide back support (Don't hold your breath while doing this)
- ✘ While carrying the object DO NOT twist or bend at the waist, move your feet and legs when turning.
- ✘ Keep the load as close to your body as possible
- ✘ To set the object down, use the same technique used to lift the object

### Other Useful Safety Tips:

- ✘ **Take your time!** You are more likely to be injured when you are tired or cold
- ✘ **Lift as smoothly as possible**, try not to "jerk" the lift
- ✘ When working as a team, **communicate clearly** if you intend to drop or put down an item. Let your helpers know if you are tired or are running out of room to maneuver. Work and move together.

## Electricity safety

- ✘ Be mindful of the location of all electrical lines outside the house and switches and sockets in your work area in the house.
- ✘ **Use proper plugs for power tools.**
- ✘ **Do not overload wall sockets.**
- ✘ **Do not alter three prong plugs** to fit two prong sockets, get an adaptor.
- ✘ Ask the intern for a **safety blanket to cover outside lines** when working around them with ladders or scaffolds.
- ✘ **Do not do any electrical work on the client's home.** Mustard Seeds policy is that we do not touch electrical unless we have a permit and licensed contractor present.
- ✘ **Make sure those painting around power lines are instructed of the danger and understand not to paint the lines.**
- ✘ **Keep power tools out of water and the rain.**

## Being a safe worker

1. **Wear personal protective equipment** (safety glasses, hard hats, gloves, etc.) as required for each job.
2. **Wear appropriate clothing** for the job. A tee shirt, long pants and substantial work shoes are minimum clothing requirements; protective clothing and equipment must be worn when necessary.
3. **Never remove locks, warning, danger, or lockout tags** on any apparatus, valves or switches unless you placed them and the hazard no longer exists. Consult your supervisor if someone else's lock or tag prevents work.
4. **Be sure that operators can always see you** when working around heavy equipment, cranes, or trucks.
5. **Be alert to conditions and work processes in surrounding areas** so that you can foresee and avoid dangers. Be aware of the presence of other workers and equipment.
6. **Do not enter barricaded or "roped off areas" without appropriate authorization.** They are considered danger zones.  
**Do not throw or drop materials from one area or level to another** unless under special controlled conditions and permitted by your supervisor.

## Housekeeping

1. **Follow these procedures for cleaning up spilled materials** or liquids:
  - If you know what the substance is, and you know that it is not hazardous, clean it up immediately.
  - If the substance is known to be hazardous, ask your supervisor for specialized instructions for clean up.
  - If you do not know what the substance is, try to identify it and contact the staff member. Maintain a safe distance, and do not clean it up.
2. **Collect rags, packing materials, sawdust** and other combustible materials daily and place in appropriate metal containers with lids.
3. **Collect objects with sharp edges** (scrap sheet metal, scrap glass, bottles, metal cans) and place in containers that will safely hold the material.
2. **Return all tools and equipment to the appropriate storage area** (toolbox, truck, storeroom).
3. **Keep all work surfaces dry and clean** to prevent slips and falls.
4. **Keep walkways, aisles, roadways and other travel routes clear.**
5. **Protect floor openings** by providing adequate barriers and covers.

## No horseplay!