Construction Worker – General – Fact Sheets



WHAT DOES A CONSTRUCTION WORKER DO?

Construction is an industry that requires working at ever-changing locations and work environments. This profile refers to general construction workers. Others at a construction site include electricians, carpenters and plumbers.

Some of the main duties of a general construction worker are to:

- Install various commercial, industrial or residential systems.
- Ensure that projects conform to building codes and regulations.
- Use, clean and maintain various types of equipment.
- Supervise or apprentice other workers.

What are some health and safety issues for construction workers?

- Pain or injury from physical overexertion, repetitive manual tasks, or working in awkward positions.
- Exposure to moulds, fungi and bird or rodent droppings.
- Exposure to lead, wood dust, asbestos, paints, solvents, and other toxic chemicals or materials.
- Working in extreme temperatures and UV radiation.
- Working with hand tools, powered tools and heavy powered equipment.
- Excess vibration in the hands, arms or body from powered tools or equipment.
- Confined spaces.
- Noise.
- Working at heights.
- Electrical hazards.
- Hazardous energy control including lockout/tag out.
- Working with cranes, hoists, and other material handling equipment.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Respiratory hazards from wood dust.
- Explosion and fire hazards from combustible dusts.
- Stress.
- Shift work or extended work days.
- Working alone.

- Struck by mobile equipment.
- Maintaining good housekeeping.

What are some preventive measures for construction workers?

- Scan the workplace for existing and potential hazards before work begins and take appropriate controls. Be aware that conditions can change constantly.
- Inspect all equipment and machinery for any defects before work begins.
- Keep tools and equipment in good working order.
- Use correct personal protective equipment and apparel, including safety footwear.
- Keep all work areas clear of clutter and equipment.
- Avoid awkward body positions or take frequent breaks.
- Learn safe lifting techniques.
- Have training before beginning any task, especially high risk activities such as working at heights, hazardous energy control (lockout/tag out), or confined space entry.
- Follow a recommended shiftwork pattern, and be aware of the associated hazards.
- Be aware of seasonal hazards from working in extreme temperatures.
- Know how to get help in an emergency for working alone situations.
- Be aware of the emergency response plans before work begins.

What are some good general safe work practices?

- Follow safety procedures for:
    - Confined space entry
    - Working at heights
    - Electrical safety
    - Lockout/tagout of machinery
    - Machinery
    - Ladders
    - Material handling
    - Working with tools and equipment
    - Working alone
    - Extreme work temperatures
    - Fire safety
- Practice safe lifting techniques.
- Follow company safety rules.
- Stay informed about chemical hazards and WHMIS 2015.
- Know how to report a hazard.
- Follow good housekeeping procedures.

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