

TOOLBOX TALK #2

COMMON WORKPLACE SAFETY HAZARDS – PART I

No matter what jobsite you look at, many of the same hazards exist. Knowing what you might encounter will give you a leg up on the issues before they can occur. Here are just some of the common hazards found on all jobsites.

Working at Height

It shouldn't be a surprise that this hazard is frequently spotted. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data shows that falls to a lower level accounted for approximately 33% of all construction fatalities. OSHA standards related to scaffolds and ladders are regularly among the most frequently cited violations. Employers need to identify all locations where fall protection is necessary, train employees and verify by auditing their fall protection program. Companies need to supply the correct fall protection PPE and realize that proper anchor points must be used or established. When not using personal fall arrest equipment, proper guardrails or safety nets must be installed and used properly.



Poor housekeeping

Clutter that blocks building exits, aisles and stairs are an accident waiting to happen. Stacking and storing material in unsafe ways can also cause problems including slips and trips. Workers should wait for housekeeping times and days or wait for "someone else" to clean up after them. Housekeeping is a job that is continuous. As the mess is made, it should be cleaned up. With storage of materials, make sure there are safe designated areas for compatible materials and that they are stacked with stability in mind.

Electrical – Extension cords

Many electrical hazards on the jobsite are related to inappropriate use of extension cords. "Daisy chaining" extension cords together is not a good work practice. In fact, it is frowned upon by cord manufacturers. When cords are daisy chained, these can easily overdraw electricity from the circuits, causing the wires to heat up and potentially result in a fire.

Workers need to ensure that they are using the right cord for the job. Typically, a more expensive cord has a heavier gauge, which allows it to take more power without getting hot. The same applies for using a single power strip to plug in several different devices – the power strip may not be rated for the combined wattage needed for all the high draw tools being plugged into it.

Cords left lying on the ground also can pose a major trip hazard. They can also be subject to traffic abuse if run over by forklifts or feet, which can wear down insulation and create shock hazards.