



Safety Manual
2010

I. INTRODUCTION

On Rebuilding Day, remember that safety must be everyone's number one priority. Falls from ladders and step-ladders, improper use of power tools, and injuries to hands, feet and limbs are the most common injuries reported. In addition, auto-related claims such as backing into parked cars are on the rise. All volunteers should read this safety manual carefully, and take all necessary and reasonable precautions to maintain adequate safety standards throughout the day. Every House Captain should go over safety concerns with their team at the start of the day. Make sure the homeowner is also aware of safety hazards, and remember that many of our homeowners are elderly with vision and mobility limitations and are therefore more susceptible to accidents and injury. If for some reason there is an unrepaired safety hazard when you leave, make sure the homeowner is made aware of the situation.

GOOD SAFETY PRACTICES ON WORK SITES ARE CRITICAL TO ENSURE THAT REBUILDING TOGETHER BALTIMORE CAN CONTINUE ITS MISSION OF SERVING LOW-INCOME HOMEOWNERS AND COMMUNITIES. OUR INSURERS EXPECT THAT OUR VOLUNTEERS WILL FOLLOW SAFETY GUIDELINES ON WORK SITES. THE REBUILDING TOGETHER SAFETY PROGRAM HELPS TO KEEP OUR INSURANCE COSTS AT A REASONABLE LEVEL. PLEASE HELP THIS TO CONTINUE BY FOLLOWING ALL SAFETY PRACTICES OUTLINED IN THIS MANUAL AND REQUIRING THAT ALL VOLUNTEERS ON YOUR WORK SITE DO THE SAME.

THANK YOU!

IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT, NOTIFY THE HOUSE CAPTAIN IMMEDIATELY!

II. GENERAL SAFETY REMINDERS

A. PREPARING FOR THE WORKDAY

- Read and understand the volunteer waiver form. Direct any questions to the House Captain.
- Children under the age of 14 and pets should not be on or near the worksite. They pose a significant safety hazard to volunteers and to themselves.
- Store valuables in your car or another secure area.

- Label your personal items, such as tools, gloves or anything you would like returned to you at the end of the day.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothes, as they can get caught in equipment.
- Your shoes should be appropriate for the work you have been assigned to do. Consider sole thickness and tread when choosing a pair. Always wear closed-toe shoes!
- If you are going to have to dig in the ground, call Miss Utility (1-800-257-7777) 48 hours prior to beginning work to ensure that you do not disturb any utility lines in the ground.

B. DURING THE WORKDAY

- Report any unsafe conditions on the worksite to the House Captain.
- Be aware of traffic and other persons and activities in the neighborhood. Exercise caution when entering and leaving the worksite in a motor vehicle – be sure your path is clear!
- Notify the House Captain immediately if there is an accident on the worksite.
- Be sure there is proper air circulation throughout the home, especially when paint, sawdust or other materials that could be hazardous when inhaled are present.
- Wear gloves, masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as appropriate – see section on PPE for further details.
- Be aware of the condition of the floor, steps or other areas you are putting your weight on.
- Know which tools are appropriate for which tasks. Only use tools in good condition!
- Work only within your capacity – do NOT use tools that you do not know how to operate or work on tasks beyond your skill-level!
- Be sure that your task does not affect the property of any neighboring home or structure!
- If an item is broken, first consult with the House Captain and homeowner. Discard the broken item when possible to avoid future hazards.
- When outdoors, check for plants that could cause an allergic reaction, such as poison ivy or poison oak.
- Stay calm and focused on the job you have been assigned. Many accidents happen while someone is angry or distracted! If you notice a fellow volunteer is upset or distracted, tell the House Captain your concerns immediately.

C. AFTER WORK IS COMPLETED

- Return tools and materials to designated location when finished using them.

- It is everyone's responsibility to pick up trash, debris and materials.
- Vacuum/sweep the work area to gather stray debris and materials.

III. ACCIDENT AND INJURY PREVENTION

A. SLIPS AND FALLS

- Inspect walkways and surfaces to make sure they are clean, dry and free of debris, and make sure there is adequate lighting in all work areas.
- Post signs in wet, icy, greasy or otherwise slippery areas.
- Check for tripping hazards both inside and out, including pipes, loose bricks, roots, extension cords, hoses, throw rugs and uneven ground.
- LADDERS**
 - Exterior and Interior Use:**
 - Inspect ladders and step stools to ensure that they are in good condition and working properly. Do not use a damaged ladder!
 - Face the ladder when you are climbing and keep both hands on it!
 - Do not stretch to out-of-reach areas while on the ladder – come down and move the ladder to the desired location.
 - When descending a ladder, ask someone to hold the base. If a fellow volunteer is descending without support, assist them.
 - Exterior Use:**
 - Be sure to set up ladders on dry, stable ground and position the feet so they are approximately one foot from the base of the building for every four feet of the building's height.
 - Extend the top of the ladder three feet above the top of the surface it is leaning against.
 - To secure the ladder, tie it to the surface it is leaning against and dig a small trench for the feet.

B. FIRE & ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

- Do not smoke on a worksite!
- Turn off the electricity and gas before starting any major construction projects.
- Make sure power is off before working on lighting or other wiring projects.
- Make sure your work area is dry before using power tools or doing electrical work.
- Know where the nearest fire extinguisher is on the worksite.

*Remember PASS: **P**ull the safety pin, **A**im at base of fire, **S**queeze the trigger, **S**weep hose from side to side.*
- When using gas-powered equipment, let engines or motors cool before refueling.

- Before using an extension cord, make sure it is not damaged in any way.
- Always keep flammable products away from sources of heat – read labels to determine flammability.
- Watch out for overhead power lines while working outside!

C. WATER DAMAGE

- Do not attempt a plumbing job if you are not experienced!
- Locate water pipes before beginning any major construction projects.
- Turn water off before working on any plumbing project.
- Clean up all spills immediately.

D. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- DO NOT REMOVE LEAD PAINT unless you are using lead-safe practices (see Lead Paint Safety Manual published by HUD, EPA, and CDC) OR ASBESTOS. If you think there may be lead paint or asbestos in your work area, notify the House Captain immediately.
- Be aware if any materials you are working with are hazardous – be sure to receive instruction on what to do in the event of an accident.
- Keep all materials in their proper containers and make sure the containers are labeled.
- Never use food or drink containers to store chemicals!
- Many materials must be discarded in a specific way – some should not be flushed down sinks, poured into the ground or thrown in the trash! Be sure to obtain instructions on the appropriate manner for discarding the materials you have been working with.
- Thoroughly clean the work area and wash your hands after handling hazardous materials. There is still a danger of transporting the material to your eyes, mouth or someone else unless everything is cleaned, even if you were using PPE.
- Many chemicals commonly found in the home, such as cleaning fluids and polishes, paint, bleach, and pest killers are potentially dangerous. Read the labels; use chemicals only for their intended purpose, and store and dispose of them properly.
- Properly dispose of all unmarked chemicals.
- If chemicals require dilution, mix only enough for your present need.
- Never mix chemicals! For example, ammonia and bleach form a poisonous gas when mixed.
- Do not sniff chemicals to identify them!

E. POWER TOOLS

- Inspect all power tools to make sure they are not damaged, and that they have guards and grounding prongs. Also, be sure the cord of the power tool is not damaged in any way and does not pose a tripping hazard.
- Most accidents occur after the power tool has been used and is in “wind-down” mode – continue to use caution around the tool during this time.
- Do not use cords to hoist or lower tools!
- Do not keep a power tool on while it is not in use, and be sure it is turned off before plugging in the cord, passing to another worker, or setting the tool on the ground.

F. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Forms of PPE: Safety glasses; gloves; dust masks; ear plugs. Rule of Thumb: if you have to raise your voice to be heard, you should be wearing hearing protection.
- For any job that requires specific PPE make sure you receive the proper equipment and instructions if you do not know how to use it.
- Replace your PPE if it is damaged. If you must discard your PPE, be cautious and remember that any hazardous material you might have encountered could also be on the equipment.

IV. MATERIAL HANDLING/LIFTING

- Know the limits of your ability to handle heavy objects and strenuous tasks – do not take on more than you can physically handle!
- Exercise proper lifting techniques: Bend at the knees; Grab objects securely; Hold objects close to your body.
- When transporting heavy and awkward objects, make sure your pathway is clear and dry.
- Do not back up with an object in hand without checking for obstacles such as windows, breakables, ladders – or other people!
- Do not throw breakable items (such as dishes, toilets, ceramic sinks, or glass lamps) into dumpsters or onto the ground. Place them carefully so they do not shatter.

V. OTHER

A. DEMOLITION

- Always wear gloves, safety glasses, and long sleeves when doing demolition.
- Make sure the power is off.
- Beware of lead and asbestos!
- Don't rush!

B. SCAFFOLDING

- Scaffolds should only be set up by an experienced scaffold builder. Setup tips:
 - Do not use if damaged!
 - Set up on firm, level base.
 - Lock wheels.
 - Install guardrails when scaffold is over ten feet.
- Scaffolds should only be used under the supervision of an experienced scaffold user.

VI. When to Pull a Team

The homeowner should be informed as soon as any significant problem arises. Threatening behavior, verbal assaults, sexual harassment, drug or alcohol abuse or family members who refuse to pitch in are all just cause for pulling a team. Every effort should be made to change the behavior if at all possible. Involve the homeowner in solving the problem, but be firm and clear about what must happen right away.