



Habitat
for Humanity[®]
of Greater Centre County

Volunteer Safety Manual

Approved by Board of Directors - February 11, 2010

Welcome to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Centre County (HFHGCC)! We hope you will enjoy your volunteer experience with us. Whether this is your first time volunteering or you have been volunteering for a number of years, your safety on our worksite or in our ReStore is the most important thing to us.

We want your volunteer experience to be both rewarding and safe. You will be asked to do varied tasks on the worksite and in the ReStore. Each task has its own unique set of dangers associated with it. The best form of safety is your own common sense; if something seems dangerous then it probably is so do not attempt any task if you are not comfortable with it. If you are asked to do a task you are not comfortable with, please let a supervisor know and you will be reassigned. If you see someone doing something that does not seem right, please let them know and tell our Site Superintendent or ReStore Manager.

Whether you are a seasoned volunteer or a first-timer, you must have a “Waiver of Liability” on file at the worksite or ReStore. You must fill a new one out each year and or for each worksite. Please print legibly on the forms and fill them out completely.

HFHGCC does carry volunteer accident insurance; however this is secondary to any insurance you may have. If you are injured on the worksite or in the ReStore, we need an incident report filled out and submitted to us.

Once again, we hope you enjoy your volunteer experience with us.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Tom Mesko
Executive Director

Jennifer Wolfe
ReStore Manager

General Safety for Worksite or ReStore

- Everyone on site or in the ReStore must follow the safety direction of on-site supervision.
- Personal Protection Equipment - hard hats, hearing protection etc. - is required when a hazard is present.
- Know the location of First Aid Kit.
- Clearly understand the task you were assigned; if you are uncertain on how to perform the task ask for clarification.
- Speak up - if something looks unsafe, it probably is. An observer can spot danger quicker than a worker.
- Don't lift beyond your strength. Get a partner. Remember to bend your knees. Lift with your back straight.
- Keep an eye on your load as you move and turn so as not to whack someone with what you are carrying.
- Do not run when carrying tools or other items.
- Tell the supervisor immediately of any injury.
- **Think & Concentrate** on your task.

Security & Housekeeping

Many accidents can be avoided by proper on-site housekeeping. Following are some recommendations:

- Keep the area you are working in clear of debris.
- Remove nails from scrap lumber as soon as practical.
- Keep all electrical cords free of entanglement with loose material and in good repair.
- Wipe up spilled liquids on areas that may cause workers to slip.
- Build protective barriers around openings on the worksite or in any area that may cause falls.
- Excess tools, small pieces of material, sawdust, mud and power cords each represent a potential for injury; keep your work area clean.
- Stack unused lumber and materials neatly so as to reduce the chance of tripping and to assist in accounting for materials.
- Discard banding material as soon as it is removed from bundled lumber.

Worker Safety Equipment

HFHGCC will make basic safety equipment available to every volunteer such as hard hats, safety glasses, dust masks, ear plugs, etc., as needed. If you have a favorite hard hat, safety glasses or other equipment you would like to use, please feel free to bring these with you. HFHGCC is not responsible for lost or stolen equipment brought onto the worksite or into the ReStore. It is your responsibility to ensure these are secure.

General Precautions

- Personnel working during framing and roofing operations should wear head protection as the possibility exists for injuries.
- Obtain updated vaccinations such as tetanus shots.
- Wear ear protection to reduce the noise levels or duration of exposure to loud sounds.
- Eye and face protection is required when operations present potential eye or face damage such as hammering, using saws or drills or using cleaning products.
- If working in a confined dusty area, a dust mask should be worn (i.e., working with insulation, sanding drywall, etc.).
- Clothing should be loose enough to permit easy bending but not loose enough to get caught in moving tools.

Hand and Power Tools

- Wear safety glasses when operating power tools and nailing.
- Wear hearing protection when operating saws.
- Never hold the work in your hands. Place the work on a firm, level surface.
- Guards on saws must be in place & operating. Tools must be in safe condition. Keep blades sharp. Make sure wooden handles do not have splinters and cracks.
- Don't bind the blade of any saw. If a saw binds, it will kick back toward the operator. Do not overreach.
- Select the correct tool for your work. Carry only those tools you need.
- Regularly inspect tools for broken or missing pieces. Inspect cords for frayed wires or damaged insulation.
- Use grounded plugs on tools appropriately.
- Plug electrical equipment into a ground fault circuit interrupter.
- Use tools for their intended purpose.
- If unfamiliar with a tool's use, ask for assistance and take time to practice using the tool.
- Do not operate tools without approval or supervision. Do not operate a tool if you have not been trained to use it.
- Do not over exert yourself or the tool; this can lead to slips and strains.
- Place yourself in a good body position; most hand tool accidents result from being struck by the tool or flying chips.
- Disconnect power source before moving the tool, making adjustments, or changing bits or blades.
- Do not use the cord to lift or lower the tool.
- Do not fasten extension cords with staples, nails or suspend by wire.

Ladders

- Use ladders for the purposes for which they are designed. Do not use ladders for skids, braces or work benches.
- Provide a stairway or ladder for any point of access where there is a break in elevation of 19 inches or more.
- Make sure ladder size meets the job demands.
- Do not use step ladders as straight ladders; always open all four feet and lock spreaders in place on a step ladder and place in a level condition.
- Do not place tools or materials on steps.
- Use proper angles when using straight and extension ladders. When using a non-self-supporting ladder, use the “four-to-one” rule: for every four feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder one foot from the wall.
- Secure straight and extension ladders by tying off the top or securing the base.
- Top of extension ladders must extend at least three feet beyond the supporting object when used as an access to an elevated work area.
- Before climbing extension ladders, make sure latches are properly engaged,
- Extension ladders must be overlapped a minimum of three rungs,
- Keep body near the middle of the ladder. Avoid leaning off the edge of a ladder. Move the ladder frequently so as not to be tempted to lean too far.
- Do not step on the top rung or platform on a step ladder,
- Do not carry anything that will prevent holding on with both hands while ascending or descending the ladder. Use a tool belt or a tool bag to lift tools. Always keep three points of contact with the ladder.
- Only one person on a ladder at a time.
- If it becomes necessary to place a ladder in or over a doorway, barricade the door.
- Do not use metal ladders near an electrical exposure.

Scaffolding

- Ensure that the footing and anchorage for scaffolds are sound. Scaffold frames should be erected level and plumb and on a firm base.
- Never change or remove scaffold members unless authorized. Do not alter scaffolding members or use make-shift moorings. Have the Site Superintendent review any adjustments.
- Make sure top safety rail is in place before beginning work.
- Know safe working load of scaffolds and work within those limits.
- Do not allow tools, materials and debris to accumulate on scaffold.

Rough-in Carpentry

Observe all rules and precautions specified under general, power tools and ladders.

- Remove nails from discarded lumber as soon as practical.
- Always wear a hard hat during the framing stage. Watch for materials falling from above.
- Use caution when walking on joists. Watch your footing.
- Cover stair openings as soon as sub-floor is installed with suitable materials screwed to the sub-floor with deck screws.
- Install a temporary 2x6 about 6" from the bottom of the first course of roof sheathing as soon as it is installed to prevent tools or personnel from sliding off the roof.
- Install GFCI circuits in the temporary power system.
- Install a stair, ladder or ramp to provide access for personnel to any break in elevation over 19".
- Stairways with four or more risers or which rise more than 30" must include a handrail at 36" high from the plane of the horizontal surface.
- Take precautions when climbing onto or off of the roof. This is when many roof related falls occur.
- Do not step backwards on a roof. Every year experienced roofers fall off the roof by stepping backwards off of the edge.
- When roofing, wear shoes with soft soles with some tread left.
- Loose materials and sawdust should be removed frequently from the roof surfaces.
- When standing up walls, make sure there are enough people to hold up the wall and have bracing ready so it can be fastened as soon as possible.
- Make sure the wall is fully supported until the bracing is up.
- Do not allow personnel to work beneath areas being roofed.
- Never work on a roof alone.

Siding

Observe all rules and precautions specified under General, Power Tools, and Ladders.

- Move materials close to the work area to minimize carrying distances.
- Remove nails from scraps; discard properly.
- Use proper hand tools.

Insulation and Drywall

Observe all rules and precautions specified under general, tools and ladders.

- Utility knives are very sharp; keep your hands out of the path of the blades. Always retract the blade or install guard when not in immediate use.
- Fiberglass particles can be particularly harmful. When handling insulation, wear sturdy, loose, long-sleeved clothing, gloves and goggles (even glasses are inadequate protection), face mask or a respirator and a hat.
- If particles get on your skin, do not scratch. Shower as soon as possible.
- Drywall is very heavy. Stack drywall materials so that they are stable and secure. Do not ever pull a stack away from the wall as many bones have been broken by shifting stacks.
- Safety glasses and masks help prevent drywall dust from getting in your eyes and lungs, especially when working on the ceiling.

Paint, Floor & Interior Trim

- Ensure ladders are in good condition.
- Maintain good housekeeping in the work area.
- Wear respiratory protection when sanding and painting as appropriate.
- Be aware of others working in the vicinity. You don't want to miss your mark and strike someone working in the adjacent area
- Place ladders on solid footing and don't leave any tools or paint on top of ladders.
- Don't cross hands to stabilize material when using a miter saw. Have someone else hold it for you.

Landscaping

- Use proper tools for the job.
- Do not over lift; place supplies as close to the work area as possible, get help if needed.
- Contact electric, gas, and phone companies for the location of cables prior to digging; this will be done by HFHGCC.
- If spreading fertilizer use a dust mask to prevent inhalation of dust particles.

Toxic Substances

- The poisons and toxic substances which can most often be found on the work site are asbestos, lead oxides, animal feces and solvents. Special care must be taken when you come in contact with any of these substances or any unfamiliar substance.
- The poisons and toxic substances which are most often found in ReStore are cleaning solvents, paints (latex), and paint strippers. If you are asked to handle any of these, use the appropriate safety equipment, gloves, masks, etc.
- In most cases you will not run into asbestos or lead oxides, unless HFHGCC is doing a rehab project.

ReStore

- Use of MP3 players and other personal electronic devices are not permitted.
- Handle donated materials with caution as one may encounter protruding nails or screws on cabinets and lumber. Also, sharp edges may exist on metal objects and appliances.
- Observe general guidelines mentioned above for use of ladders, power tools, lifting, material handling and housekeeping while in ReStore facility.
- All doorways must be kept clear, especially fire exits.
- Aisles should be kept clear of small items to prevent trip hazards.
- Only those authorized may operate trucks, forklift or heavy equipment.

Roofing

- Roofing is one of the most dangerous activities on the worksite. If you are afraid of heights, you should not be on the roof.
- Roof jacks must be used at all times when roofing is occurring. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- Scaffolding should be positioned under the work area. In the event someone does slip, the scaffolding will prevent the person from hitting the ground.
- Watch where you are stepping, especially when approaching the edge of the roof.
- Never walk backwards on the roof.
- Have a spotter positioned on the ground to keep an eye on workers. This should be the only thing the spotter does.