

BUILD SITE SAFETY LOGISTICS

Overview

Safety is *everyone's* responsibility, and it is an important consideration on all Habitat build sites. Since many Habitat crews contain volunteers without professional construction experience, it is especially important to pay special attention to safety.

The Habitat Site Supervisor and Crew Leaders will instruct volunteers on the correct and proper procedures for performing each task during a shift, including ways to minimize or eliminate potential hazards. Even experienced construction volunteers *must* follow these instructions, as these site leaders are best versed on the safest "Habitat way" to perform these tasks.

What to wear

An important key to safety when volunteering is what you wear.

- Closed-toe, hard-soled shoes are required on the build site, boots are preferred but tennis shoes are OK. No flip flops or sandals will be permitted
- Dress in weather-appropriate, comfortable clothing that can get messy or dirty.
- Do not wear dangling jewelry on-site or overly loose clothing if operating a power tool
- Pants are preferred for volunteer safety, but shorts are allowed when weather appropriate
- Habitat will provide a tool belt, tools, and safety gear when needed, though you are welcomed to use your own if preferred (make sure you mark it with your name, identifying tape, etc. so it is not lost in the mix)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Habitat will provide any necessary PPE, but you are welcomed to bring your own as well. Please be sure to return protective wear to their proper bins to ensure we have enough for each subsequent build day.

- **Hard hats** are encouraged to be worn at all times on the build site, and are required when any work is being performed above you
- **Safety glasses or goggles** help prevent dust, debris, and potential flying objects from entering eyes. Wearing eye protection is encouraged at all times, and must be worn when operating any power tool.
- **Gloves** are encouraged when carrying building materials
- **Ear plugs** should be worn when operating a power tool in a confined space or for an extended period of time
- When working indoors or unable to social distance, **face masks** must be worn
- When installing insulation, long sleeves and pants, safety glasses, gloves, and dust masks should be worn

Personal Precautions

Volunteering on the Habitat site is fun and exciting - but it can also be hard work! Keep these tips in mind so you don't overdo it on your build day.

- **Lifting** - always use the proper lifting technique of lifting with your legs & a straight back, rather than with a rounded back. Do not exceed your lifting capacity; utilize team lifts for anything over 50lbs or out of your comfort level
- **Hydration** - Habitat will have water available throughout your build day. Take frequent breaks to rehydrate, even if you don't *feel* dehydrated. Even in cooler weather, it is important to take plenty of water breaks
- **Sun exposure** - most build sites have little shade available. We will provide sunscreen, and encourage you to reapply throughout your build day. At the first indication of sunburn, reapply sunscreen and cover exposed areas with clothing
- **Over exertion** - it is important to know and recognize your personal limits. Take frequent breaks as needed, sitting down to rest, rehydrate, and grab a snack

Habitat will provide any needed

**Personal
Protective
Equipment**



**closed-toe
shoes** 
are required on the build site

Know your personal limits & take

**frequent
breaks**



Safe Build Site Conditions

There are many potential safety hazards present on any build site. Please help keep the build site safe by following these guidelines:

- **Tools**
 - Store tools in their proper places (cases & bins in tool trailer) when not in use
 - Carry tools with the sharp side edges down and away from you
- **Electrical cords and air hoses**
 - Use the needed length of extension cords - additional length can become a tripping hazard
 - Try to keep cords and hoses out of main traffic walkways
 - Keep cords out of water - if there are puddles on the worksite, utilize equipment or materials to raise cords out of water (i.e. saw horses, wood blocks, hang over a secure nail)
- **Building materials**
 - Scrap and unneeded materials should be discarded throughout the day, including bent/discarded nails and screws, small pieces of wood, foam, insulation, etc. If items are still usable, gather like-items together to be reused or stored for another build.
 - Keep main walkways clear of trash, scrap, tools, and staked materials
 - Clean up your area as you work and at the end of the day (discard scrap and return all tools, PPE, and excess materials to their proper places)
 - Remove nails and screws from all boards before re-stacking or scrapping
- **Uneven ground and trip hazards**
 - Be aware of the uneven ground often found on an active construction site
 - Clean up your area to avoid creating additional trip hazards
 - Alert other workers to any new hazards if they are created while you work

Hand and Power Tools

Using tools can be fun, exciting, and efficient when on the build site. Whether you're experienced or a novice with hand and power tools, there are important guidelines all volunteers must follow:

- Habitat regularly inspects the condition of all hand and power tools, but please immediately alert a Site Supervisor or Crew Leader if you suspect any damage or defects
- Always select the correct type and size of tool for the task, and make sure it is sharp or properly adjusted - ask a Crew Leader if you are unsure
- Carry tools with any sharp edge downward and away from you. Close or cover any open blade before moving it
- When using tools, hold them correctly. Any cutting tool should be used with the blade moving away from your body. Avoid using your hand or fingers as a guide to start a cut
- When using a cutting tool (hand or power), be sure the blade is sharp before use
- When working with a hammer, wear a tool belt with a hammer loop to hold when not actively in use
- You must be at least 18 years old to operate a power tool
- Do not wear loose clothing or gloves when using power tools
- Safety glasses must be worn when operating a power tool. Ear plugs and dust masks are encouraged when using these items for a prolonged period of time
- Site Supervisors and Crew Leaders will provide proper instructions before using power tools, and maintain supervision for all volunteers new to these tools
- Never place or leave a tool on a sloping overhead surface or in a precarious position where it could be a fall hazard (i.e. on the roof, on top of a ladder)
- When not in use, tools should be returned to their properly marked place in the tool trailer — special boxes, chests or cabinets.

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to operate power tools

Help keep the build site tidy by
**picking up any
scrap materials**

**Crew leaders &
site supervisors**
will provide instruction on site

Ladders

Habitat utilizes A-frame, extension, and step ladders on the build site. Crew Leaders and Site Supervisors will provide on-site instruction for setting up the appropriate ladder when needed, following these guidelines.

- Choose the correct size of ladder needed for project
- All legs of A-frame and step ladders should be fully opened, with safety locks in place before use. Do not lean a folded A-frame ladder against a wall as a straight ladder - it is not secure enough and could slide out from the bottom
- Do not step on the top rug or platform of your ladder
- Use proper angles when setting up A-frame and extension ladders. Utilize the “four-to-one” ratio: For every four feet of height, move the bottom of the ladder one foot away from the wall. A ladder is pitched at the proper, safe angle if you can comfortably grasp the rung at shoulder height
- An extension ladder should extend three feet above the supporting object when used as access to an elevated work area
- Extension ladders should be secured by tying off the top or securing the base (i.e. have another volunteers stand with their feet against the base of the ladder)
- When climbing, always face the ladder and keep your hands free for climbing. Only one person on a ladder at a time
- Place the ladder on solid footing in a safe location. If there is danger of the ladder moving while you work, tie it down. If there is danger of the ladder being hit, barricade it. If the feet of the ladder are not level, dig the ground out under one foot with the claw of a hammer instead of raising the other with a block
- Move your ladder with you, and avoid leaning too far over from either side
- If it becomes necessary to set up a ladder in or over a doorway, alert other workers in the area
- **You must be at least 18 years old to be above 6 feet off the ground (i.e. extension ladders, scaffolding, and roof work)**

Scaffolding

When working at extreme heights or at a height with changing positions (i.e. exterior siding), scaffolding may be used instead of ladders. Crew Leaders and Site Supervisors will lead its installation, but may need extra assistance.

- A scaffold must be designed to support four times the weight of the workers and the materials resting on it
- All workers should wear a hard hat when working on scaffolding
- When setting up, use mud sills and base plates to ensure a stable, level base. Use adjusting screws, not blocks, when on an uneven grade
- Install cross bracing at every level
- Cross bracing should not be used to climb scaffolding
- Make sure there is no more than a 1” gap between walk boards
- Stay 10 feet away from power lines when installing scaffolding
- **You must be at least 18 years old to be above 6 feet off the ground (i.e. extension ladders, scaffolding, and roof work)**

Roofing

Heights aren't for everyone, but we are always happy to bring someone - safely - out of their comfort zone if they are interesting in trying something new!

- Habitat utilizes wall walker fall protection equipment in the stages between trusses and finished shingles. This provides an easier method for getting on and off the roof, and provides an extra layer of protection when working overhead
- Take extreme precaution when climbing on and off wall walkers & the roof itself
- Soft-soled shoes with a tread are preferred when roofing
- Do not allow scrap materials and sawdust to accumulate on the roof
- Avoid setting tools and items on the roof when not in use, and secure building materials to prevent them from sliding or being blown off the roof
- Do not throw items from the roof unless someone on the ground declares the landing area “all clear” and prevents others from entering the area
- **You must be at least 18 years old to be above 6 feet off the ground (i.e. extension ladders, scaffolding, and roof work)**

Volunteers must be at least
18 years old
to be 6 feet off the ground

Extension ladders should
be set up at a
4:1 ratio 

Avoid leaving anything
on the top 
of a ladder or roof