Weekly Safety Meetings
Safety Training for the Construction Industry

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COMPANY NAME: _____

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Hydraulic Hazards

Hydraulic systems use pressurized fluids to create force that allows machines to do the heavy lifting, pushing, pulling, or digging that needs to get done. On the jobsite, you have to work with and around equipment operated by hydraulics including forklifts, loaders, excavators, bulldozers, cranes, and others.

Hydraulic equipment can expose you to hazards during normal operations and during equipment failures. But by following safe work practices, you can prevent accidents, serious injuries, and even fatalities.

Since hydraulic fluids are under extremely high pressure, even a minor leak can cause a severe injury. A fluid leak could be a forceful jet or spray. The fluid could burn you or be injected into your body. Hydraulic fluid injection injuries can cause infections, tissue damage, chemical burns, and can even lead to an amputation. Hydraulic equipment presents hazards such as pinch points, crushing hazards, fluid spills, equipment tipovers, burns, and fires. And, if a hose or coupling fails and disconnects, it can whip around with enough force to kill you.

Pro tips for working safely with hydraulic equipment:

- Don't operate hydraulic equipment unless you're trained, certified, and authorized to do so. Follow safety guidelines and recommendations from the manufacturer.
- Regularly inspect hydraulic hoses, fittings, and components. Check for leaks at connections. Visually inspect hydraulic lines for cuts, abrasions, leaks, wear, or other damage.
- Don't overload hydraulic equipment. It can lead to tipovers, collapse, or equipment failures.
- Never bypass or remove safety shields or guards.
- Keep your hands and body far away from moving parts when hydraulic equipment is operating.
- Prevent hydraulic fluid from coming into contact with your skin by wearing the necessary PPE like gloves and eye protection. If an injection injury occurs, get medical attention immediately.
- Follow LOTO procedures when you perform maintenance or repairs on hydraulic systems.
- Before working on a hydraulic cylinder that's supporting a device like a loader bucket, be sure to shore up the device so that it can't drop down and crush you. Use cylinder stops, locks, or blocks.
- Keep spill kits nearby so you can quickly contain a spill if there is one.
- To prevent burns and fires from hot hydraulic fluid, let the system cool down before you change lines, connections, or fittings.
- Keep a fire extinguisher nearby. Hydraulic fluids can catch fire.

SAFETY REMINDER

When you're working around hydraulic systems, you're probably being exposed to excessive noise. Wear earplugs.

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Scaffold Safety

Scaffolds are temporary, elevated structures that are common on construction sites. When you work at heights, they provide a safe, stable work platform to support you and the materials you need. Working on a scaffold is safe as long as it is set up, used, and maintained properly.

Control the common hazards associated with scaffolds.

Inadequate training: Before you work on scaffolds, you may need training in scaffold setup, use, and teardown. Pay attention. The competent person should understand scaffold safety, so ask questions if anything's unclear.

Electrical hazards: Keep scaffolds clear of overhead power lines, electrical wires, and other obstructions. Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) when you use electrical equipment on a scaffold.

Collapse or tipover: A competent person must supervise the assembly and disassembly of a scaffold. Scaffolds should be erected on a solid base and be plumb. Be sure scaffold components are compatible with one another. Inspect all components for damage, defects, or missing parts. Don't overload a scaffold with excessive materials or too many workers. Never exceed a scaffold's weight limit.

Falls: Before you begin to set up or dismantle a scaffold, you'll need to plan for fall protection. The competent person will determine whether it's possible and safe to use fall protection without creating a greater hazard. Once the scaffold is set up, if you're working 10 feet above a lower level, you must be protected from falling. You can use a personal fall arrest system, or guardrails and toeboards, or safety nets to prevent falls. The choice depends on the situation. Make sure you know how to use the fall protection equipment correctly.

Slips and trips: Practice good housekeeping. Keep the scaffold platform clean and clear of tools, material, debris, snow, and ice. Wear slip-resistant safety footwear.

Improper access: To get on and off the scaffold, use proper access points like built-in ladders or stairs. Never climb on cross-bracing or any other areas that are not designed for access. Always maintain three points of contact while climbing on or off scaffolding.

Falling objects: Keep the people below you safe from falling objects. Use toeboards, tool lanyards, or safety nets to stop tools and materials from falling off the scaffold.

Bad weather: Monitor weather conditions and don't work on a scaffold during storms, strong winds, or rain. After the weather passes, make sure the competent person has checked the scaffold and said that it's safe for you to get back to work on that scaffold.

Follow safe work practices to prevent deadly accidents.

SAFETY REMINDER

Use hand signals or radios for clear communication between scaffold workers and those working below.

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Safe Use of Solvents

Solvents are chemicals used to dissolve or dilute other substances. Products such as paint, turpentine, thinners, cleaning products, and glues have harmful solvents in them. Acetone and alcohol are solvents that are used to degrease tools and equipment. Other common solvents include benzene and mineral spirits. Exposure to solvents is a common health risk on the jobsite. You have to think about how to work safely with and around solvents.

You might think a little exposure to solvents is harmless, but it could seriously injure you or cause long-term health problems. Solvents can irritate your eyes and respiratory tract. Some solvents can be absorbed through your skin. And depending on your level of exposure, solvents can damage your liver, kidneys, heart, blood vessels, bone marrow, and nervous system. Protect your eyes with goggles and a face shield. Protect your skin with chemical-resistant gloves. You may need a respirator to avoid breathing solvent vapors. Follow all the precautions listed in the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and on the label.

When you need to use a solvent, follow these guidelines:

- The best defense is avoidance. When possible, choose a less hazardous and less volatile solvent.
- Read the label and the SDS before you use any solvent. The SDS will tell you what kind of PPE you need, what to do in case of a spill, and how to prevent a fire.
- Work in well-ventilated areas.
- Use caution when transferring solvents from one container to another. Take only what you need for the work you're doing.
- Store flammable solvents in properly-ventilated areas constructed of fire-resistant materials. Keep containers closed unless you're pouring or using the solvent.
- Never smoke when using solvents. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby in case a fire starts.
- Clean up spills right away. Dispose of contaminated rags according to local laws.
- Never use solvents to rinse or wash your hands, face, or any other part of your body.
- Make sure you know what type of first aid you'll need in case of an exposure. Know the locations of emergency eyewash stations and showers.

Most solvents are flammable, and many are highly volatile and extremely flammable. They evaporate quickly and the vapors are very dangerous. You need to make sure that neither the liquid solvent nor the vapors get to an ignition source, like a spark or a flame. Before you use a solvent, think about where you'll be working, what you'll be doing, and what work is going on around you.

SAFETY REMINDER

Avoid breathing the vapors of solvents, even if you're only working nearby.

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Abrasive Wheels and Grinders

Abrasive wheels and grinders are essential for many tasks like shaping the ends of pipes, cleaning up welds, cutting steel beams, and grinding concrete surfaces. But they also expose you to serious hazards.

Use safe work practices.

PPE: Always wear the necessary PPE. You could need safety glasses or goggles, a full face shield, hearing protection, gloves, and respiratory protection. Cutting and grinding tools create loud noise and vibration, get very hot, cause cuts, and produce flying debris, sparks, and toxic dust. You must protect yourself from all of these dangers.

Inspections: Make sure the tool is in good shape before use. Verify that the grinding wheel or disc is appropriate for the material you're working on, and that it's rated for the speed of the grinder. Inspect the grinder and the abrasive wheel. Adjust guards and the work rest, if there is one. Visually inspect the wheel for chips and cracks and do a ring test. You don't want the wheel or disc to shatter and send dangerous shrapnel flying through the air.

Avoiding contact: Keep your hands away from moving parts. Maintain a solid, comfortable grip and keep a good stance so you stay balanced. Stand to the side, not in front of the wheel, to avoid kickback.

Control these hazards while cutting and grinding.

Flying debris: Cutting and grinding produces flying chips and particles, and may create a flurry of sparks. Debris can fly off in every direction and can get into your eyes, causing punctures, burns, and other severe injuries.

Burns: The friction between the wheel and the workpiece generates a lot of heat. Touching a hot wheel or workpiece can cause burns.

Fires: One stray spark could ignite an inferno. Check your work area to be sure there aren't any materials or chemicals that could catch fire or explode.

Cuts: Abrasive wheels spin at very high speeds. They can easily cut through your clothing, gloves, and skin before you have a chance to pull away. Never touch a moving wheel. Keep clothing away from rotating parts. Use guards to reduce the possibility of contact with the wheel.

Electrical hazards: Grinders are power tools. A bad cord can give you a dangerous electric shock. Don't use them near water unless they're designed for wet environments.

Respiratory hazards: Cutting and grinding generate dust, fumes, and other particles that you can inhale. Wear the right respirator to protect your lungs from the material you're working with. Along with PPE, consider using exhaust ventilation to control dust.

SAFETY REMINDER

Protect hands and arms from hazardous vibrations. Wear anti-vibration gloves. Keep a firm, but comfortable, grip. Take regular breaks when you're cutting and grinding.

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