

North Central Massachusetts Habitat for Humanity Safety Manual

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General Safety

In order to assure the safety of volunteers and affiliate members, the North Central Massachusetts Habitat for Humanity (NCMHH) has set forth the guidelines in this manual. All volunteers are expected to abide by the safety instructions they receive from this manual and the site supervisor.

Safety is the responsibility of everyone, and there are general safety rules, which everyone needs to follow while on the Habitat site:

- make sure that you know your own physical capabilities, and that you do not over exert yourself
- on hot days, make sure that you drink plenty of liquids, especially water, to avoid heat stroke and heat exhaustion
- on cold days, make sure that you are dressed appropriately and you avoid over exertion
- in winter and late spring there may be snow and ice on the site; so be careful while walking and carrying heavy items
- for the safety of all volunteers, NCMHH does not allow volunteers under the age of 18 to use power tools
- for the safety of its venerable volunteers, NCMHH does not allow volunteers over the age of 75 to use ladders or scaffolding

Electrical Safety

Electrical hazards may present risk of serious injury or death. Care should be taken to reduce the risk of electrical shock. Some of the ways of doing this are listed below;

1. Check extension cords for frays or cuts in the insulation before and after each use.
2. Keep extension cords away from wet areas.
3. For trouble (drop) lights, ALWAYS unplug the cord before changing the light bulb.
4. Keep extension cords away from saw blades, drills, and other power and hand tools.
5. Be familiar with the electrical shut off in case of emergency.
6. Only licensed electricians should perform wiring of outlets, light fixtures, etc.

Emergency Response

Volunteers should notify the site supervisor if they hold first aid and CPR certification, and are willing to perform these services. They should then become familiar with the location of the first aid kits on the sites.

Every volunteer should know the address of the Habitat site.

Serious Injury

In case of serious injury call for someone with a cell phone to call 911, and request an ambulance to the site address. Then call for the site supervisor. Examples of serious injuries are falls from a high roof, serious cuts with a saw, severe head injuries, losing consciousness, etc.

Minor Injury

In case of minor injuries requiring first aid, attend to your injury or find someone to attend to it, then notify the site supervisor.

Fire

In case of fire, call for someone with a cell phone to call 911 and request the fire department to the site address.

Fire Prevention

Fire prevention is one of the most critical parts of safety. Fire is easily preventable in most cases. Below are some of the actions that can be taken to prevent fires on the Habitat sites:

Flammables

Flammables may be solid, liquid or gas. Do not use or store flammables near open flame or hot areas. Examples:



- a. Do not store wood, cardboard or paper near heaters;
- b. Do not cut or grind metal near wood shavings;
- c. Do not store kerosene, gasoline, or other flammable liquids near heaters or in direct sunlight
- d. Do not store propane tanks near heaters

Fueling of generators, heaters, or other fuel powered devices.



- a. Always turn off the engine before refueling the device.
- b. Use care to avoid spills.
- c. In the event the fuel does catch fire, drop the fuel can away from you, leave the area immediately, and notify the Project Supervisor of the fire.




Fire extinguishers can be a great a tool to put out small fires, but they may also spread fires when not used properly. If you are not familiar with the operation of a fire extinguisher, DO NOT attempt to put out a fire.



Floor and Wall Openings



Floor and wall openings can cause serious injury from falls. Openings should be marked or barricaded to prevent falls. While on the Habitat site, always walk forward; walking backward may cause a fall through an opening.

Hand Tools

Hand tools are tools that do not require electricity or batteries to work, but may still be dangerous. The following table shows example of hand tools and explains the dangers associated with them. In addition, it also lists the precautions that should be taken when using them.

Hand Tools	Dangers	Precautions	Personal equipment
 Sledge Hammer	Hitting another person; flying debris or splinters; dropping hammer on foot	Clear the area when swinging; hold onto the hammer firmly;	 

 <p>Hammer</p>	<p>Flying nails and splinters; hitting your thumb or fingers;</p>	<p>Use caution when starting nails</p>	
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<p><u>Hand Tools</u></p>			
 <p>Razor Knives</p>	<p>Cuts</p>	<p>Use caution when cutting items</p>	

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are liquids, gases, or solid materials that can pose a health threat to humans. Volunteers should ask about the substances that they will use and if there are any dangers associated with them.

Examples of hazardous materials are listed below:

Hazardous Material	Concerns	Prevention
WD-40	flammable	do not use near heat or flame
PVC Primer	inhalation of fumes	use in a well ventilated area
PVC Cement	inhalation of fumes	use in a well ventilated area
Kerosene	flammable	do not use near heat or flame
Propane	flammable	do not use near heat or flame
Fiberglass Insulation	irritates skin & eyes	wear long clothes & safety goggles
Concrete Patch	chemical burn	wear rubber gloves

Hazardous Material	Concerns	Prevention
Spray Paint	inhalation of fumes, harmful to eyes	wear dust mask & safety glasses

Housekeeping



Although the Habitat site is a construction site, items should be stored in an orderly fashion. Proper storage of items is a good way to prevent injuries and keep track of items.

Personal Protective Equipment



HFH is committed to ensuring the safety of affiliate members and volunteers. One way that HFH does this is to provide personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE are items that are worn on a person's body to protect them from injuries. The affiliate should make PPE available for its members and volunteers, and train them on its use.

The following table shows samples of PPE, describes its purpose, and show examples of when to use it:



Personal Protective Equipment

Equipment	Protection Offered	Use With	Comments
 <p>Safety Glasses</p>	Protects the eyes from flying objects, such as nails, dust, splinters, etc.	drills, hammers, saws	
 <p>Hard Hat</p>	protects the head from small falling objects, and low clearances	people working overhead; low clearance areas	


Personal Protective Equipment

Equipment	Protection Offered	Use With	Comments
 <p>Gloves</p>	Protect hands from cuts, punctures, burns	hand saws only, handling lumber and metal	DO NOT use near power tools
 <p>Safety Boots</p>	Protect feet from falling objects, punctures	in construction area	

Personal Protective Equipment

Equipment	Protection Offered	Use With	Comments
 <p>Dust Mask</p>	protects a person from inhaling dust	power saws, insulation, cleaning	
 <p>Ear Plugs</p>	protect ears from loud noises	power saws	

Personal Protective Equipment

Equipment	Protection Offered	Use With	Comments
 <p>Long Sleeves & Pants</p>	protect a person from cuts, scrapes and dusts, such as insulation	insulation	only required when handling insulation

Power Tools

Use caution when operating power tools. Keep hands away from saw blades and drill bits. Wear safety glasses when using power tools.


Scaffolding

Scaffolding should only be installed under the supervision of the site supervisor. Care should be taken when working on scaffolding. Persons uncomfortable with heights should not work on scaffolding. Never walk backward on a scaffold; this can cause loss of balance and falls.




Stairways and Ladders

Ladders are an excellent way to reach high areas, but they must be used in a safe manner. A ladder that is not placed properly or used incorrectly may result in a serious injury. Below are instructions on how to set and use a ladder properly.

Step Ladders

	<p>Make sure supports are locked in place</p> <p>Make sure all four legs are on level ground</p> <p>Do not stand on or above the top 2 rungs of the ladder</p>	
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Extension Ladders

	<p>Make sure supports are locked in place</p> <p>Make sure both legs are on level ground</p> <p>Do not stand on or above the top 2 rungs of the ladder</p>	
	<p>Extension ladders should be angled by placing your feet at the base of the ladder and stretching your arms straight out. Your fingers should just touch the ladder.</p>	
	<p>Ladders must be extended 1 to 3 feet above the upper point of contact</p>	

Always climb down a ladder the same way you climb up, (facing the ladder).