

OHBA Safety Pages: Train Your Brain

For Safer decisions, pause and think

Experts tell us there are at least two ways to look at every problem:

- We can rely on our automatic, involuntary response, which is influenced by intuition and unconscious bias.
- We can engage in deliberate, analytical problem solving.

This is sometimes called “fast” and “slow” thinking, and there are advantages and disadvantages to both. For instance, if we’re about to be run over by a speeding taxi, the best response is to leap to safety. But if we’re surprised by a sudden fire, the proper response requires conscious thought.

Making safe decisions often requires that we slow down and think deliberately. This helps to counter any biases, such as assuming company leaders always know what’s right or sticking with the way things have always been done. Consider asking the following:

- What are other ways to perform this task?
- What alternatives are the safest?
- Do we have enough information to make an informed decision?
- Is any key information missing?
- Why are we doing it this way?

The following techniques also can help build resilience and increase performance, focus, and memory while reducing stress, anxiety, and fatigue.

Switch on

Ask simple questions to activate deliberate thinking:

- What’s changed since my last shift?
- How would someone else see this?
- Does this mean I’m safe?

PAUSE before acting

Perceive the situation.

Allow at least 10 seconds.

Understand before taking action.

Seek new solutions.

Evaluate if things are going as expected.

Take a walk

Focused walking, such as in a labyrinth, can induce a contemplative or meditative state of mind.

Prime for safety

Conduct a job hazard analysis or pre-task plan.

Take care of yourself

Reducing fatigue, eating a balanced diet, and managing stress can increase our capacity for deliberate thinking.

Unplug from screens

Powering down electronics provides time to reset, refresh, and refocus.

Practice mindfulness

Follow these steps for five minutes each day:

1. Sit with your back straight.
2. Take a deep breath and close your eyes.
3. Notice your natural breathing pattern but don’t change it.
4. As your mind wanders, bring your awareness back to your breathing.

Credit: Saif.com



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SAFETY PAGE MEETING GUIDE

Topic: Train Your Brain

Employer: _____ Project: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Shift: _____

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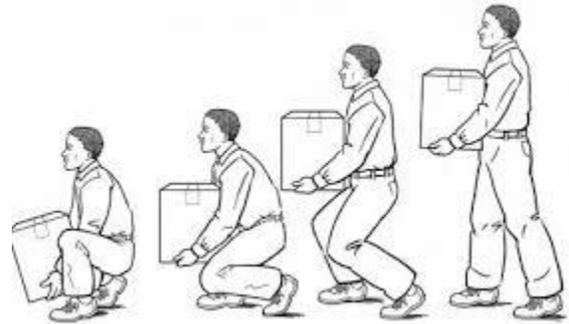
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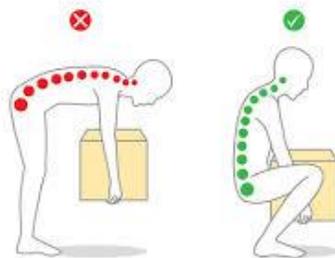
OHBA Safety Pages: Lifting and Carrying

Introduction: Back injuries are caused by lifting and carrying heavy materials, working in awkward positions, and bending often to lift materials off the ground. Construction has one of the highest rates of back injuries of any industry.



Main Message:

- Whenever possible, use mechanical equipment like a dolly to move heavy objects horizontally.
- Never try to lift an item weighing over 50 pounds by yourself.
- Plan your lifts; make sure the path is clear and you are facing the direction of travel before lifting.
- While lifting, tuck in your chin to keep your neck straight, and keep your back as straight as possible.
- Lift with the leg muscles, which can help protect your back.
- Ask for help with heavy or awkward objects.
- Avoid twisting your body while carrying an object.
- Coordinate and practice team lifting before using it for moving objects.



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OHBA Safety Pages: Silica Safety

What Is Silicosis? Silicosis is lung damage caused by breathing dust containing extremely fine particles of crystalline silica. Crystalline silica is found in materials such as concrete, masonry, rock, some types of counter tops, ceramic tile, drywall joint compound, etc. When these materials are cut, drilled, ground, or sanded they can leave fine dust suspended in the air. Breathing in these fine particles can produce lung damage.



How Do Construction Workers Get Exposed? Silica is a basic component of soil, sand and granite. Most crystalline silica comes in the form of quartz. Common sand can be as much as 100 percent quartz, therefore there are many ways to be exposed at construction sites. Silica occurs in many commonly used building products including mortar, grout, cement, stucco, plaster, bricks/blocks, rocks/stones, ceramic tile, drywall joint compound, and fiber-cement board, as well as sandblasting materials.

Some Activities in Which Silica Dust May Be Present In The Air:

- Masonry work (e.g., mixing mortar, cutting brick/block, tuck pointing, etc.)
- Dry sweeping of concrete, mortar, and sand
- Sanding/finishing drywall joints
- Sawing fiber-cement board, stone, or tile
- Concrete work (e.g., sawing, grinding, drilling, jackhammering, etc.)
- Demolition of concrete and masonry structures or plaster ceiling/walls
- Loading, hauling, and dumping rock/stones as well as back fill against foundation walls, etc.

How Can Silica Exposure Be Reduced or Eliminated? The key to silicosis prevention is to prevent silica dust from becoming airborne. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires administrative, or engineering controls be used whenever possible. A simple control may work: Example: A water hose to wet dust down at the point of generation. Some additional steps you can take to protect yourself:

- If in construction, follow the control measures in Table 1 of the OSHA Standard that is associated with your work tasks.
- Conduct an Industrial Hygiene (IH) survey to determine this hazard in your normal work operations. An IH survey should be done to determine air concentrations of respirable crystalline silica. From this data an employer can determine the proper protection plan for their employees. These IH surveys can be conducted by your workers' compensation provider, Oregon OSHA, or a safety consulting firm.
- Always use dust control systems that are available for many types of dust generating equipment and maintain them properly.
- When sawing concrete or masonry, use saws that provide water to the blade.
- Use local exhaust ventilation or vacuum systems that meet the requirements in the OSHA Standard to prevent dust from being released into the air.
- Minimize exposure to nearby workers by using good work practices.
- Use abrasives containing less than 1 percent crystalline silica during abrasive blasting to prevent harmful quartz dust from being released in the air.

Only use respirators as directed in Table 1, or IH Survey Requirements, etc. Employees using respirators must be included in a Respiratory Protection Program that is compliant to 29 CFR 1910.134, *Respiratory Protection*, as adopted by Oregon OSHA. This program includes medical screening, fit-testing, employee training, employee exposure data, and a cartridge change-out schedule. Refer to the manufacturer to determine a filter change out schedule.



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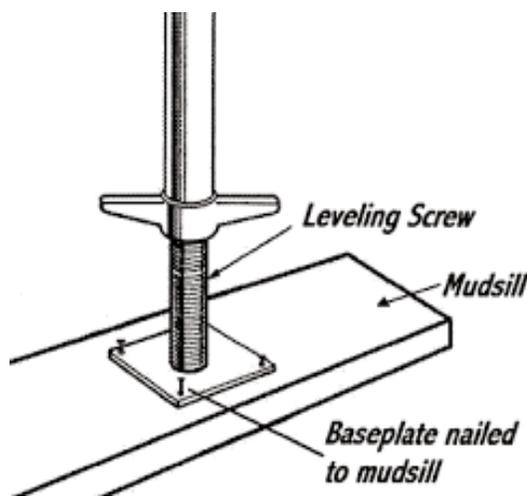
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OHBA Safety Pages: Scaffolding Requirements

- Scaffold erection and dismantling must be done by, or supervised by, a qualified person or persons.
- The vertical supports of scaffolds must be – Placed on a firm base or mudsill – Capable of withstanding superimposed weight from the scaffold and anything placed on the scaffold.
- Do not use pallets, boxes, concrete blocks, bricks, or other unstable materials to support scaffolds.
- Base plates and mud sills: Poles, legs, posts, frames, and uprights must bear on base plates and mud sills or another firm foundation. Footings must offer full support without settling (e.g. dirt, sand, gravel, and warm asphalt are foundations that can allow settling or displacement).
 - A concrete slab is considered a firm foundation. However, it's still a good practice to use mud sills. Nailing base plates to mud sills will prevent a scaffold from “walking.”
 - The scaffold must be plumb and braced so that it does not sway. All scaffolds must be erected plumb and level and be designed for the intended use.
- Supported scaffolds with a height to base-width ratio greater than 4-to-1 (including outrigger supports) must be prevented from tipping. Use ties, guys, braces, or another means that provides at least the same degree of safety. Install guys, ties, or braces where the horizontal members support both the inner and outer legs. They must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions (or at the closest horizontal member to the 4-to-1 height) and be repeated vertically at least every 20 feet if the scaffold is up to three feet wide, every 26 feet if the scaffold is more than three feet wide.
- Bracing requirements for prefabricated scaffolds must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Bracing for job-built scaffolding must meet standards acceptable to Oregon OSHA.
- Load capacities: Is the load capacity for your scaffold rated for light, medium, or heavy duty? Is it rated for one person? Two? Three? Scaffolds and components must be able to support their own weight and at least four times the maximum intended load applied to them. The maximum intended load includes workers, equipment, and supplies.
- All scaffolds must be inspected before use by those who will use them, regardless of who erected them. No damaged or weakened scaffold may be used until it has been effectively repaired.



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OHBA Safety Pages: Opioids in Construction

Introduction: Construction work can result in painful injuries that are sometimes treated with prescription opioids. One in four people prescribed opioids for long-term pain become addicted and opioid-related deaths are on the rise.

Main Message:

Chris' Story: Chris strained his back after lifting heavy materials. He tried to ignore the pain, but it wouldn't go away. Chris went to the doctor and was prescribed an opioid to treat the pain. The pills reduced the pain, but his back never got better. Chris found that he needed the pills to make it through the day. Eventually, his doctor refused to give him another prescription. Chris went to another doctor and got a new prescription. Over time his job performance and family life began to suffer. Chris went back to his doctor and asked for help. His doctor helped him to find treatment for his opioid addiction. Chris is now in recovery and using a non-addictive treatment for his pain.



Remember This:

- Your employer must provide a safe work environment to prevent injuries. If you see a hazard on the job, report it to your supervisor or foreman.
- Follow safe work practices to prevent injuries, such as getting help when lifting heavy materials.
- If you are injured, talk to your doctor about non-addictive medications or physical therapy to treat the pain.
- Opioids should be the last option, and if prescribed, used for the shortest time possible.
- Addiction is an illness that can be treated. Get help if you find you are dependent on pain medication to get through the day.
- Check with your employer or union to find out if they have a program to help, such as an employee assistance program (EAP) or member assistance program (MAP).
- Call this confidential national hotline to find out about treatment options near you, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or go online at <https://resources.facingaddiction.org>.



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