

### PLANNING - THE KEY TO A SAFE WORKSITE

As we all know, construction projects are driven by a schedule and adherence to this schedule can make or break the project in terms of completion and profitability. Over the years I have found those project superintendents or project managers that “plan their work and work their plan” usually run a safer, better organized, and more profitable project than others. These managers have generally addressed many of the safety issues with each trade before the trade arrives on the project to begin work and hold the trade accountable to maintain the safety standards established at the beginning of the project.

The problems arise when the project begins to fall behind the schedule. Pressure to complete the job is applied, and workers begin to stretch themselves to get the job done, such as the electrician who decides to work a circuit hot rather than shut it down, or the duct installer who stands on top of the 10-foot ladder to tape up a joint rather than getting a larger ladder. Then an accident occurs. (These are only two examples of the problems I have observed and are not meant to single out any specific trade. They are, however, two of the more serious hazards commonly found on a site.)

Here are a few suggestions to organize your personnel on the site and follow your safety program:

1. Start the day with a sort review of the work to be accomplished and hazards associated with the work
2. Make sure you have all the tools and equipment to complete the task. Good extension cords, proper size ladders, etc.
3. Review the work area 2 days before your crew is to arrive to insure hazards created by others are not an issue. Is the area clean, are there guard rails missing, is it safe to erect the scaffold you need to use?
4. Depending on your role on the site, communicate with the GC or subcontractors to get the hazards corrected
5. Above all, maintain your integrity and don't allow anyone to pressure you into placing your workers in harms way

### STEPLADDER SAFETY

The step ladder is one of the most commonly used tools on a construction project and in the home. It is designed for easy set up and mobility, yet is also one of the most abused tools on

the site. Injuries from ladder use can be some of the most serious injuries, including broken bones, twisted knees and ankles, and even death. Some of the common mistakes with ladders are:

1. Standing too high on the ladder. The worker cannot stand on the top cap or the first step down unless the ladder is designed for such use
2. Leaning the ladder against the structure. The ladder is designed to be opened up with the spreader bars locked before the worker can climb the ladder
3. Not facing the ladder when climbing up and down
4. Not maintaining the three points of contact when climbing up or down
5. Walking the ladder. If you need to move the ladder, climb down and move it

Can you think of a few other issues I did not mention? Good...use them in a safety meeting with your crew.

## **SAFETY MEETINGS – YOUR CHANCE TO PROTECT YOUR CREW**

The first few minutes of the day as your crew arrive onsite are the best time to build safety into your project. The time spent reviewing the work assignments for the day and the hazards associated with those assignments will create safety awareness for the crew. The repetitive nature of the daily pre-task review will educate the worker and soon safety will become a part of your build process. All it takes is a small amount of time on your part and you will have begun to create a safety culture on your project.

Any idea what this process is called? The Job Hazard Analysis! Yes, that dreaded process many supervisors fear as a time-consuming monster can be easily incorporated into your routine. Then document your meeting with the crew and place the record in the file for future use - good job!