

AIR CONDITIONING/HEATING CONTRACTORS

Workplace Safety Tips

The installation of air conditioning equipment provides several potential hazards that can cause serious injury. FFVA Mutual Loss Control consultants can assist in evaluating workplace exposures and provide appropriate loss control recommendations.

Air Conditioning/Heating-Workplace Exposures

- Moving and lifting heavy materials
- Working in awkward positions or confined areas such as rooftops or ceiling installations
- Ladders and material lifting equipment
- Improperly grounded electrical tools and equipment
- Welding and cutting

Developing A Loss Control Program

To successfully implement a workplace safety program, management must be willing to reduce and eliminate workplace injuries. There has to be a 100% commitment to establish an injury-free working environment.

Lifting Safety Tips

- All employees should be properly trained in lifting and carrying materials to avoid muscle strain and back injuries.
- Proper lifting includes:
 - Always check the weight of the object to be lifted. It's okay to ask for help. Lift heavy objects mechanically whenever possible.
 - Place feet close to the load, bend knees, get a firm grip, and lift straight up keeping the load close to the body.
 - Make sure there is a clear path to the final destination.
 - Set the load down slowly, bend at the knees and keep back straight.
- For manual lifting of compressor units, air units, and air handlers, weight restrictions should be developed in written safety rules.

Residential and Commercial Safety Tips

- New hires should receive proper on-the-job training.
- Supervision and training of new hires should include the following:
 - Proper lifting practices
 - Safe material handling practices
 - Proper use of hand and powered tools
 - Proper use of personal protective equipment such as gloves, hard hats, and eye protection
- Ensure all crane operators are certified.
- Lift straps and cables on cranes should be inspected before lifting large compressor units.
- Ground employees should be instructed in proper hand signals to use with crane operation.
- Only certified personnel should operate scissor lifts.
- Fall protection harnesses should be utilized when installing roof-top units.

- Ensure all ladders and scaffolding meet OSHA safety requirements (refer to OSHA 1926.25 sub part L.)
- All ladders should be inspected daily for possible fractures.
- All employees should be trained in proper placement and positioning of ladders.
- Portable powered hand tools should be inspected regularly for proper grounding and worn surfaces.
- All hand and powered tools should be checked regularly for wear and operational efficiency.
- Eye protection and/or face shields should be used when performing welding, cutting or grinding functions.
- Commercial projects require all subcontractors to follow safety requirements of the General Contractor.
- Contact utility company to determine if there is power line exposure in the work area.

Fleet Safety Tips

- Only certified/authorized drivers should be permitted to drive company vehicles.
- Motor vehicle reports should be obtained from the fleet insurance carrier every six months.
- Authorized drivers should have an annual defensive driving course.
- Criteria for determining an adverse driving record should be developed such as number of points per year, DUI, and chargeable accidents.
- Vehicle inspections should be the responsibility of the driver. Documented inspection forms should be used.
- Maintenance department should have authority to remove a vehicle from service until recommended repairs are made.
- Travel to jobsite in personal vehicles should be discouraged. Use of personal vehicles creates the potential for an automobile accident and a subsequent workers' compensation claim.

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