



# SAFETY TIPS

## Plumbing Contractor Workplace Exposures

Worksite locations for plumbing contractors have several potential hazards that can cause serious injury. FFVA Mutual safety consultants can assist in evaluating these exposures and provide appropriate loss control recommendations to minimize accidents.

### Plumbing Contractor Workplace Exposures

- Back strains and sprains
- Chemical and welding burns
- Cuts, lacerations
- Electrocution
- Eye injuries
- Puncture wounds, burns
- Slips, trips, falls

### Developing a Loss Control Program

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

### Workplace Safety Tips

- All employees should be trained in proper lifting techniques.
- All powered equipment should be inspected daily. Examples include backhoes, trenching machines, and welding equipment.
- All supervisors and foremen should be trained in First Aid and CPR to provide initial treatment when an accident occurs.
- All workers should be trained in the safe handling, storage, cleanup, and disposal of chemicals, sealants, and adhesives.
- Apprentices and less experienced employees should be paired with experienced plumbers until they are properly trained.
- For larger worksites, an employee safety officer should be assigned to monitor and inspect the jobsites to identify potential hazards.
- Hallways, aisles, and walkways should be free of debris on new construction sites.
- If excavating work is performed, utility companies should be contacted to locate any underground power lines.
- Lifting objects mechanically is always preferred over manual lifting whenever possible. Use of the "buddy system" to share the lifting task is another alternative.
- Personal protective equipment such as safety glasses, gloves, kneepads, welding goggles, welding shields, and proper footwear should be required.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) should be available to all workers (explaining chemical and job material exposures.)
- Welding shields should be worn for larger jobs in addition to hats and gloves.

- Workers should be prohibited from wearing loose, torn, or frayed clothing while operating equipment with moving parts.
- Workers should be required to wear welding goggles, hats, and gloves when performing small welding jobs.

### Warehouse Safety Tips

- Aisles should be open and free of debris or inventory to prevent collisions or slips and falls.
- All forklift operators must complete OSHA training.
- All oxygen and acetylene tanks should be chained to the welding cart to avoid a potential for tank tip over and ignition of gases.
- All spare tanks should be chained to the wall with 30-foot separation between oxygen and acetylene tanks.
- All welding, cutting or grinding operations should be isolated with welding curtains to avoid creating a spark and a potential ignition of gases.
- Any interior worksite should be properly ventilated to avoid gas build-up and potential ignition of gases.
- Caps should be on all tanks to avoid possible leakage and potential for ignition of gases.
- Inspection of all welding equipment should occur monthly.
- Paints, chemicals, and sealants should be properly labeled and stored in locked cabinets.

### Ladders and Step Ladder

- Allow only one person on the ladder at a time.
- Always inspect ladders before use.
- Do not carry items in your hands while climbing up or down a ladder.
- Do not lean on the ladder.
- Do not place a ladder at a blind corner or doorway without blocking or roping off the area and posting warning signs that will detour traffic away from your work.
- Do not stand on a ladder that wobbles or leans.
- Do not stand on the top two rungs of any ladder.
- Do not try to "walk" a ladder by rocking it. Climb down, step off, and then move it.
- Do not use ladders that have loose rungs, cracked or split side rails, missing rubber footpads or other visible damage.
- Face the ladder when climbing up or down, keeping bellybutton in center of rail.
- Keep ladder rungs clean and free of grease.
- Maintain a three-point contact by keeping both hands and one foot or both feet and one hand on the ladder at all times.
- Use ladders only as intended.
- When performing work from a ladder, face the ladder. Do not lean backward or sideways from the ladder.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Do not continue to work if your safety glasses become fogged. Stop work and clean the glasses until the lenses are clear and defogged.
- Do not wear hard hats that are dented or cracked.
- Do not wear jewelry or coats with metal zippers to work.
- Wear earplugs or earmuffs in areas posted "Hearing Protection Required."
- Wear safety glasses when operating drills and when cutting or snipping copper or light gauge wire.

- Wear safety goggles when welding, soldering or cutting metal.
- Wear the dielectric gloves when working on electric current.

### **Fleet Safety Tips**

- 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.
- Maintenance department should have the authority to remove a vehicle from service until recommended repairs are made.
- Motor vehicle reports should be obtained from the fleet insurance carrier every six months.
- Only certified/authorized drivers should be permitted to drive company vehicles.
- 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.
- Vehicle inspections should be the responsibility of the driver. Documented inspection forms should be used.