

St. Henry – Charitable Helpers Safety Program

The purpose of the safety program is to make sure that participants are aware of the inherent dangers associated with home improvement projects and encourage participants to avoid taking undue risk that may lead to injuries.

The focus of this presentation will be on the most common injuries followed by common sense methods of avoiding injuries.

- A. Scope of Work to be completed – the only work that anyone on this project has volunteered to do is general yard work, including picking up debris, leaf raking, light tree or shrub trimming, mulching, and planting small plants or shrubs. If asked to complete any work beyond your capabilities notify the job coordinator immediately.
- B. All participants must have a Charitable Helpers Permission Slip signed by a parent or guardian.
- C. Trip/fall – Construction and landscaping debris, equipment or materials. A disturbing number of injuries result from poor housekeeping on a construction site.
 1. Water, scrap wood with protruding nails and all other debris should be kept away from work areas.
 2. Periodically police a work area to dispose of debris, reposition supplies or equipment to otherwise make sure trip and fall hazards are minimized.
 3. Keep supplies and tools in a safe location when not being used.
“A clean job is a safe job”
- D. Misuse of tools or equipment – Know the purpose of each tool or piece of equipment, and use each for the task it was designed to accomplish. No using tools as toys or pretending they are anything but a tool for their intended use.
 1. Keep cutting edges sharp.
 2. With the exception of gas or electric powered leaf blowers, only adults 18 years of age and older will operate powered tools or equipment.
 3. Proper buffer zones will be required when adults are operating powered equipment.
 4. Lubricate your tools on a regular schedule.
 5. Before plugging or unplugging tools make sure the switch is in the off position.
 6. Watch out for pinch points.
 7. Do not remove guards or barriers.
 8. No shortcuts like using a screwdriver to pry or a wrench as a hammer.
 9. Wear the proper safety equipment when using tools or power equipment.
 10. Return tools to safe storage properly so that the next person can pick items up without the possibility of injury.
 11. Repair or dispose of damaged tools.

“Hand tools and power equipment make your job much easier. Care for them properly and use them wisely”

E. Improper lifting – Protect your back and other muscles. Back injuries can be painful, disabling, paralyzing and sometimes fatal.

1. Before lifting anything make sure it is not too heavy or bulky.
2. Never be afraid to ask a team member for assistance. Remember two backs are better than one!
3. Use work saving devices like hand trucks, dollies or wheelbarrows.
4. Make sure that you have a clear path of travel before you lift an item.
5. Before you lift, stand close to the object, bend down at the knees and straddle it, get a good grip and lift with your legs while keeping your back straight. The secret is to let your legs do the work.

“You’re here today – we want you BACK tomorrow!”

F. Heights – Far too many injuries occur when people, tools, materials or debris fall. Proper use of ladders, stairwells and scaffolding is imperative.

1. Only adults at least 18 years of age are allowed on ladders of more than 3 feet in height.
2. Inspect ladders for defects, broken rails and split steps.
3. Select the correct length. Ladders that are too short or too long can cause an accident.
4. Place ladders on solid ground and secure the spreader lock.
5. Fully extend and expand A-frame legs.
6. Check for power lines in the area – you do not want to become an electrical conductor!
7. Always face the ladder when you climb.
8. Never reach too far, keep your buckle between the rails.
9. Avoid carrying tools in your hands when climbing – one slip could send you down- use a hand line or pouch for the tools.
10. Never stand on the top two steps.
11. On stairways, avoid carrying objects that block your view and avoid clutter.

E. Hand and Foot Protection – Everyone should have brought gloves with them - wear gloves to whenever possible to avoid injuries to your hands; - You must wear shoes; boots are preferred, but at minimum fully laced and tied shoes, no sandals, open shoes or flip flops.

Summary-Safety is a cooperative undertaking requiring a total safety consciousness on the part of every team member. No one likes to see someone injured. Proper planning, a good safety program, the right tools and communication combine to prevent accidents. One last thing to remember – never ignore near miss accidents. Learn from what happened so you can make sure it doesn’t happen again, to you or any other member of your team!