



## THE BASICS ARE:

1. Identify potential hazards.
2. You and your work area should be prepared.
3. Use safe work practices.
4. Clean up properly.

## 1. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL HAZARDS

### Assess who and what is potentially at risk:

- You.
- Your family (pregnant women in particular).
- Pets.
- Your garden.
- Neighbours and passers-by.
- The environment in general.

### Check if there will be risk of:

- Physical injury.
- Materials hazards.
- Animal pests.
- Damage caused by animal pests.

## 2. PREPARE YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK AREA

### Will you require protective clothing/equipment, such as:

- Goggles.
- Full-face shields.
- Dust masks/respirator designed for the job you're doing.
- Steel-capped boots.
- Hearing protection.
- Overalls.
- Gloves for heat, abrasion, chemical protection, etc.
- Ties/cap to keep long hair out of the way.
- Snug clothing that won't catch or get in your way.
- Also, be sure to remove any jewellery that could get caught, or be in your way.

## 3. USE SAFE WORK PRACTICES

### Heavy lifting:

- Have at least two people to lift and manoeuvre heavy items.
- Use safe lifting techniques.
- Use techniques to secure items that could fall or slip.
- Rent lifting equipment if appropriate.

## Tools/power tools require:

- Knowledge.
- Skill.
- Strength.
- Training.
- Safety guards.
- Maintenance.
- Clearance from cords in cutting/work area.
- Clearance from body parts.
- A firm but not rigid grip.
- Disconnection from power and have all movable parts at a complete stop before changing any blades, drill bits, etc.
- Push sticks.
- Guides.
- Jigs.
- Caution with items that heat up with prolonged use like blades and drill bits.
- Only ever being used for jobs they were designed for.
- Being the correct size.
- Being unplugged when not being used.

## Work area should be:

- Distraction free.
- Clean, dry, tidy.
- Adequately lit and ventilated.
- Set up so materials and work surfaces are stable, secure, clean, tidy and dry.
- Isolated from the rest of your home and outside.
- Secured with tarpaulins, drop sheets, tape, safety barriers, etc.
- A no-eating, drinking or smoking area.

## Safety on the job includes:

- Not working when your concentration is lacking.
- Stopping work if you become distracted.
- Never rushing or taking shortcuts.
- Learning how to use all your tools and equipment safely before you start your project.
- Only using tools with which you have experience and training.
- Never using tools that are too large, heavy or powerful for you to handle.
- Carefully reading and understanding all relevant safety and instruction literature.
- Never overreaching or standing in an unbalanced or uncomfortable position.
- Not wearing loose clothing, jewellery or anything that can become tangled in moving parts of tools or on a ladder, etc.
- Always cutting away from your body unless absolutely necessary.
- Checking walls and floors before cutting or drilling:
  - » What are they made of?
  - » Do you have appropriate tools for cutting/drilling etc?
  - » Is the location appropriate for the modification you are making?
  - » Are there any hidden structures/services?
- Washing your hands before you eat, drink or smoke.

## Ladders must be:

- Used on an even, solid, stable, flat surface.
- Only ever used on sloping surfaces if they have adjustable legs.
- Only leaned on solid surfaces.
- Wedged or cleated at the feet.
- Used close to your job to stop overreaching.
- Used as hands-free as possible, use hooks, holders and tool belts.
- The appropriate type for the job.
- Only used when you're with somebody.
- Used carefully; never stand on the top two steps.

## Electrical/Plumbing

- Always use a licensed electrician or plumber.
- Call the "Dial before you dig" number: 1100.
- Look up for electrocution hazards when carrying ladders or other long items.
- Never use power tools with damaged cords.
- Keep cords clear of where you are cutting, drilling etc.
- Electricity and water are a deadly combination.
- Make sure the fuses in your fuse box have not been tampered with and will cut power in the event of an accident.
- Make sure you have a safety switch to minimise the dangers of electrical accidents.
- Disconnect power and/or water if working with/near those services.

## Timber

- Check for and remove all metal items from recycled timber.
- Use precautions with treated, manufactured and potentially toxic timber.
- Never burn treated timber in barbecues, fireplaces or poorly ventilated areas.
- Avoid inhaling sawdust and getting some types of it on your skin.

## Toxic/dangerous materials

This includes substances that are poisonous, as well as fine dust or powders that may be inert, but that can cause physical damage especially when inhaled.

## Chemicals used during renovation pose dangers from:

- Inhalation.
- Ingestion.
- Absorption.

## Existing dangers in the home - Check for:

- Asbestos.
- Lead.
- Treated, manufactured and toxic timbers.
- Dust contaminated with harmful substances.
- Other fine dusts and powders.
- Pest droppings and urine.
- Mould, mildew and fungus.
- Pesticide contamination.
- Pest damage.

## Avoid or minimise risks by:

- Following manufacturers' instructions precisely.
- Keeping all dangerous materials away from pregnant women, children and pets, etc.
- Ensuring good ventilation.
- Using respirators /dust masks.
- Stopping powders and dusts spreading from work area.
- Never mixing chemicals other than by manufacturers' instructions.

## Products that can pose problems include:

- Paint.
- Paint thinner.
- Paint stripper.
- Varnish.
- Glue.
- Fabric.
- Carpet.
- Fibreboard.
- Plastics.
- Solvents.

- Some spray packs.
- Wax.
- Cleaning products.
- Disinfectants.
- Fuels.
- Treated, manufactured and toxic timber.

Respirators must be used to minimise the dangers of using these and other potentially harmful products.

### **Pets and gardens**

- Keep pets away from your tools and supplies as well as your work area.
- Isolate them from any dust, powders and fumes, etc.
- Bathe pets where possible if they become contaminated.
- Don't empty vacuum cleaner bags into your garden.
- Don't hose rubbish and dust on to grass or into a garden bed.
- Remove pets from site or secure them where they won't be stressed.
- Take pets showing any signs of illness to a vet immediately.

## **4. CLEANING UP**

### **Waste materials**

- Avoid wasting usable materials, get them to other people. Sell, donate, swap, etc.
- Never dump waste.
- Do not tip anything down the sink or into drains.
- Check what can go into domestic rubbish.
- Dispose of all waste materials as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Find appropriate facilities that accept the types of waste you have.
- Where required by law, have professionals remove hazardous materials, eg asbestos.

### **Cleaning**

- Vacuum, dust, launder, wipe down or mop any surfaces that could have collected dust in the rest of your home.
- Steam cleaning carpets at the end of your job can be a good idea.
- Always wash your hands when taking breaks.
- Shower as soon as you have finished working.
- Leave your overalls, boots, cap and anything else contaminated in your work area.

### **Danger signs**

Seek medical advice if you or anybody near your work area are feeling unwell or suffering from any of the following:

- Lethargy.
- Headaches.
- Nausea.
- Skin rashes.
- Respiratory problems.
- Nerve damage.
- Allergic reactions.
- Vomiting.
- Burns.

Pregnant women, babies, young children and pets may be more susceptible to the effects of hazardous materials at lower levels of exposure.

Please get expert advice on safety issues for your specific job. The information above is general in nature and not a complete guide to the dangers of, and the safety measures needed for, DIY.