



Richmond and Westmoreland Counties Habitat for Humanity Construction Safety Policy

Adopted November 15, 2007

I. Training of Workers

It is the responsibility of the Site Construction Supervisor to be sure that all staff, volunteers, and future homeowners who are doing sweat equity work are properly trained of the work practices appropriate for the tasks in which they will be engaged. Included in this training are

- The use of protective gear for the head, eyes, ears, and lungs.
- The proper use of hand tools.
- Lifting heavy materials.
- The proper use of power tools with the initial supervision of those who are inexperienced. No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to use power tools on the job site.
- Use caution with power cords to be sure they are not used in wet areas, are not frayed, and that they are properly grounded.
- The proper use of ladders including using them on solid footing, resting adequately on the top, and that they are set at proper angles.
- To be alert to working near someone who is on a ladder or on the roof in case tools or material are dropped.
- The importance of keeping a clean work area to avoid injury. It is especially important to keep sawdust, dirt loose nails, and material scraps off of roof surfaces where workers are prone to slip.
- Proper use of scaffolding, if used. Its installation must be approved by the Site Construction Supervisor.

II. Volunteer Management

The Site Construction Supervisor generally will arrange the volunteer work crews since he has the best perspective of the immediate tasks to be accomplished. However, from time-to-time he may enlist the aid of the affiliate Executive Director in making contacts. A roster of volunteers is maintained both at the Habitat Office and by the Site Construction Supervisor(s).

The Site Construction Supervisor(s) will insure that all volunteers and staff who work at building sites have signed a limiting liability form on an annual basis.

Time sheets that include individual workers will be kept by the Site Construction Supervisor(s) and the original forms will be filed in the affiliate office.

III. Site Construction Methods

The Site Construction Supervisor(s) will maintain the plans approved by the County Land Use authority and will be responsible for insuring that building code requirements are met and that necessary inspections are done on a timely basis.

When heavy equipment is being used during such phases of construction as excavating, backfilling, grading, and hoisting trusses, volunteers are told to keep a significant distance from the work area unless given specific and training for the task at hand. One example might be when trusses are hoisted, a worker may hold a line that orients the truss as it is laid into position or he may place the hook on the truss and stand back while it is hoisted.

When other subcontractor work is in progress, e.g., plumbing or HVAC work, volunteers are told to avoid their work areas.

A sliding chop saw and air nailers are used. These devices have built-in safety shields, but nonetheless their use requires caution and training in correct usage procedures. Other power hand tools including circular saws, drills, planes, jigsaws, etc. will also be used and require training and supervision by the Site Construction Supervisor for those who are inexperienced.

Wood framing is generally used. The exterior walls are framed, sheathing added and a wind and moisture barrier is added before the wall is raised. Lifting of the walls is done manually and the walls are built in sections whose length is tailored to the available help. A rule of thumb is that at least one volunteer is needed for each 6 foot length of wall.

The roof work poses special risks. Generally, trusses are used. A crane is hired to lift them in place. Only experienced workers are allowed to climb on the

trusses to align them. The roof sheathing is applied by workers who are accustomed to working on inclined surfaces and who are wearing appropriate shoes. Care is needed to be sure that loose material and sawdust is kept off of the roof and that the roof sheathing is placed with the rough surface upward to insure the best footing. The ladders should have a level, firm footing and if possible a stabilizing bar should be used at the top end.

Siding work also requires the use of ladders and the same ladder precautions apply here. Scaffolding generally is not necessary, but if it is used, it is the responsibility of the Site Construction Supervisor to be sure it is safe and the workers are told of the necessary cautions including keeping the area below clear.

The interior finish work is less hazardous since the material is generally lightweight. A small chop saw, however, is generally used, as is a finish nailer. Both of these tools require the same training and supervision.

If volatile chemicals that are used, special cautions for inhaling their fumes need to be made clear. In addition if the fumes are flammable, all the electrical tools must be unplugged and kept unplugged while the chemical is in use to avoid explosions and/or fire.

Children under the age of 16 are not permitted on the work site while work is in progress.

IV. Emergency Response

The Site Construction Supervisor must have a cell phone on site at all times. In the event of a serious injury, he will call 911 for an EMT expertise and ambulance service. If the injury is not serious and the volunteer agrees, The Site Construction Supervisor can call an end to work for that day and transport the injured to the nearest hospital which in most cases will be the Tappahannock hospital.

All significant injuries will also be report to the Richmond and Westmoreland Habitat for Humanity office at 804-493-1500. If necessary, a voice mail message will be left.

A Red Cross approved first aid kit will be kept at the job site for minor injuries.