

EMERGENCIES HAPPEN: GET READY

The recent devastating earthquake in Haiti and China reminded us that emergencies can happen anywhere and anytime.

Each job site offers different safety challenges and different potential for emergencies.

Our contractors are responsible for providing a safe job site, and we know from experience that the vast majority of them are highly professional and deeply committed to safety. But it's also important for us as individual members to be aware of emergency safety resources.

Working inside buildings, these resources include fire extinguishers and marked emergency exits for evacuation. Working outdoors, we should be aware of the myriad hazards around us, plus important safeguards and routes to safety in emergencies.

Emergency response plans generally include:

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Emergency response plans are intended to:

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The emergency resources that should be available at every job site include:

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To make the best use of these resources, a member of each job site crew should have training in first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Laborers training centers have taken the lead in preparing members for dealing with emergencies by offering specialized training to members.

Consider taking advantage of this training opportunity. Emergencies can happen anywhere and anytime, and knowing how to respond can make all the difference.



NOW HEAR THIS: PROTECT

Our hearing is vital and vulnerable.

It's vital for safety on the job, where hearing instructions and warnings can be crucial.

And it's vital everywhere else in our lives, for connecting with family, with friends, with anyone.

Unfortunately, it's also vulnerable: Exposure to loud noises causes hearing loss that is cumulative and can be permanent.

Fourteen million Americans work where hazardous noise levels threaten hearing loss. This includes many, many Laborers — especially members with 15 years or more of service and those who work with heavy machinery, air hammers and power saws. A power saw generates 110 decibels, while a normal conversation generates only 60 and 125 decibels is usually painful. Laborers' hearing can recover over time from exposure to loud noises, but time takes its toll. The longer the exposure, and the louder the noise, the more damage and hearing loss. Workers cannot be exposed to 90 decibels or more without hearing protection; and even with hearing protection, exposure must be limited. For 90 decibels, it's eight hours; for 95 decibels, four hours; and for 100 decibels, two hours.

Remember the big earmuffs that New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees put on his baby son at the SuperBowl? That's just one form of hearing protection, with a band (over the head, under the chin or behind the neck) holding noise-attenuating cups over the outer ears to seal out noise.

If there is hearing loss, for some people, hearing aids can compensate, especially with new digital technology.

However, they are expensive and some people unfortunately consider them embarrassing. While 37 million Americans have some form of hearing loss, less than a quarter of those who would benefit from hearing aids actually use them.



YOUR HEARING ON THE JOB AND HOW TO GET HELP FOR HEARING LOSS

To get the best hearing aid on the best terms, careful shopping is crucial.

Here's how:

1 Choose an audiologist or hearing aid technician carefully, to ensure proper fit and adjustment. Consult the Hearing Loss Association of America and the American Academy of Audiologists for lists of providers and ask for recommendations among friends and relatives.

2 Prepare for your office visit with key questions:

a. *Do you sell more than one product line?*

The types of hearing aids are generic: behind the ear open fit, behind the ear with ear mold, and inside the ear canal. But you'd be wise to choose a professional that handles more than one brand of these types.

b. *How do you test patients' hearing?*

The most accurate examination is an extensive assessment in a soundproof booth. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which regulates hearing aids, requires a doctor's examination, or a waiver. A follow-up test, while you are wearing the hearing aid, is also important.

c. *Can I get a copy of my hearing test?*

You want these results in case you decide to visit another professional, other than the audiologist who conducted the test, to obtain your hearing aid.

d. *Is there a fee for the fitting, in addition to the purchase price for the hearing aid?*

Usually the cost of fitting is included in the purchase price, but make sure.

e. *How often will you adjust the hearing aid?*

Some professionals offer unlimited adjustments, but at least ensure that your purchase price includes two or three office visits after the initial fitting.

All these questions should be answered in your contract. Read it carefully and understand exactly what is included in the price, including follow up visits, trial periods, warranties, and batteries.

Safeguards are in place to protect your hearing on the job, and hearing aids may be able to restore some amount of hearing even if it has been damaged by long term exposure to noise.

Use hearing protection on the job and shop carefully for a hearing aid, if needed.

LEAD SAFETY

New federal guidelines are enhancing lead safety on the job.

Lead was outlawed from the consumer marketplace in 1978, but it remains in older buildings and in some materials common on our job sites. The new federal Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule, which went into effect in April, requires contractors to maintain healthy and safe workplaces, with protections against exposure to lead through dust and fumes.

Lead dust is produced by grinding, cutting, drilling, sanding, scraping or blasting surfaces coated with lead paints; by tearing down structures painted with lead paints and by cutting through leaded cables and wire. Lead fumes are produced by using heat guns to remove lead paint from surfaces, by welding or soldering lead-containing materials, and by torch-cutting painted and uncoated metal.

Lead can enter the body by inhaling the dust or fumes or by ingesting dust that settles on hands, clothing, tools, hair, food and drink — even cigarettes. The body stores lead in bones, the blood and internal organs, where it can accumulate and cause serious problems including memory problems, muscle and joint pains, constipation and stomach disorders. Early signs of lead poisoning include fatigue, headache, poor appetite and a metallic taste in the mouth.

Any building built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint, so the new regulations apply to any residential building of that age or older and any commercial or public building of that age or older where children could be regularly present, such as schools, day care centers and hospitals.

Contractors working on such buildings must:

- ✓ Apply to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval as a Certified Renovation Firm and receive required training and certification from an EPA-accredited training provider for Lead Safe Work Practices.
- ✓ Assign a Certified Renovator to be present at each project and ensure that workers use lead safe work practices throughout the project.
- ✓ Provide consumers or tenants with the EPA pamphlet “Renovate Right” before starting work on the project and document that the information has been provided.

Lead safety and lead awareness training is available at LIUNA training sites.

To protect Laborers from these hazards, employers generally must:

- ✓ Reduce the amount of lead on the job by substituting other materials whenever possible during renovations
- ✓ Control exposure through exhaust ventilation, and ensure systems are working properly
- ✓ Use safe housekeeping practices, on a regular schedule:
 - No compressed air or dry-sweep to remove dust
 - Instead, use a vacuum with a high efficiency filter (HEPA) or wet-cleaning methods
- ✓ Provide a clean lunchroom separate from work areas
 - Don't eat, drink, smoke or store such materials in work areas
 - Wash face and hands before eating
 - Clean the lunchroom after each shift
- ✓ Provide respirators for all members on the job
- ✓ Provide protective clothing and gloves
 - Don't wear protective clothing off the job site
- ✓ Hold regular training on:
 - The hazards of lead exposure
 - Effective control measures including engineering controls and work practices
 - Effective use of respiratory protection and the limitations of respirators
 - Good personal hygiene
 - Understanding blood lead levels and testing
 - How to avoid bringing lead off the job site and home to endanger families and friends

Lead can be a serious health hazard on the job. Fortunately, serious safeguards are in place to protect Laborers in dealing with it.



LABORSAFE is a publication of the NYS Laborers' Health & Safety Trust Fund.

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