

Halloween fire safety tips

Having fun on Halloween is easy, but do you know how to keep your family safe from dangers lurking around the corners? One of the most common hazards present on Halloween is fire. From 2009–2013, decorations that caught fire were the cause of an average of about 860 home fires each year. Half of these fires were because decorations were placed too close to a heat source. Here are some Halloween fire safety tips you can follow to have a fun and safe Halloween.

- Use a battery-operated candle or glow stick instead of a candle with a flame to light up your jack-o'-lantern. If you want to use a candle with a flame, select a short votive candle that is less likely to tip over.
- Never leave lit jack-o'-lanterns unattended or near a walking path.
- Keep all decorations away from flames, lights, and heaters.
- Keep exits clear of decorations so an unobstructed escape route is available in case of fire.
- Dress in costumes that do not drag on the ground and do not have dangling sleeves to avoid tripping, falling, or coming too close to a jack-o'-lantern.
- If you are making your costume, use fire-resistant fabrics, and avoid glitter.

SAFETY EDUCATE, ENGAGE & EVOLVE

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Struck-by hazards

Last month, we took a look at one of the construction industry's "Fatal Four"—caught-in hazards. In this issue, we focus on struck-by hazards. The most common struck-by hazards involve vehicles, falling or flying objects, and masonry wall construction.

Vehicles

According to OSHA, 75 percent of deaths from struck-by incidents involve heavy equipment. If you work around heavy equipment, you are at risk of being struck by moving objects (such as a backhoe arm) or becoming pinned against an immovable object, like a wall. In addition, you can be struck or crushed by trucks on the jobsite. Here are some ways to avoid these hazards:

- Inspect all vehicles before operating them; only drive a vehicle that is in good working condition and wear a seat belt.
- Always use parking brakes when parked. When parked on an incline, also chock the wheels.
- To prevent a vehicle from rolling over, only drive on roads or grades that are properly maintained. Excavations should be properly barricaded to prevent a vehicle from falling in.
- When backing up a vehicle, if you can't see behind the vehicle, make sure there is an audible reverse alarm. Another worker, standing at a safe distance, should signal you that it is safe to move.
- Make sure no one is in the area where you will use dumping or lifting devices, and never exceed a vehicle's rated load or lift capacity. Never operate a forklift if you are not trained and certified to do so.

Falling/flying objects

Falling objects hazards are common at construction sites, especially beneath cranes, scaffolds, and where work is being performed overhead. You may also be struck by a flying object if activity causes an object to become airborne, such as when using tools and machines or using compressed air. Here are some ways to reduce the risk of injury from these hazards:

- Wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE). Head protection, such as a hard hat, should be worn if there is a risk of a falling object. Safety goggles and face shields should be worn when working around tools or machines that may produce flying particles.
- When working around cranes and hoists, don't work underneath loads, inspect the equipment before use, and do not exceed the lifting capacity.
- When working at height, secure objects to prevent them from falling. To prevent or deflect falling objects, use toeboards, screens, nets, or canopies.

Masonry wall construction

Constructing concrete or masonry walls present struck-by hazards when lifting equipment is putting slabs in place or when shoring is required. To stay safe:

- Never exceed a device's lift capacity.
- Shore or brace structures until permanent supporting structures are in place or concrete has been tested to ensure that it can hold the weight. Also, use an automatic holding device to support forms in case of lifting mechanism failure.
- To prevent unrolled wire mesh from recoiling, secure the ends or turn the roll over.



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Portable gas container safety tips

You may need gasoline at your home to operate gas-powered equipment, such as leaf blowers, lawn mowers, weed trimmers, and chain saws. However, if these containers are not handled or stored properly, you are putting yourself at risk for a fire or explosion. Here are some tips for properly handling gasoline containers:

- Use only an approved portable gasoline container. These containers have special seals to prevent leaks and are made of material that is compatible with gasoline (noncompatible materials could lead to a leak or chemical reaction). Many of these approved containers are red and have an Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or the ASTM International stamp on them.
- At the gas pump, place the container on the ground before filling it. You should never fill a container that is sitting on a truck bed or inside of a vehicle.
- Do not use the gas pump latch. Manually and slowly fill the container. Also, don't fill the container to the top—there must be space to allow the gas to expand when the temperature increases.
- Store portable gas containers in a well-ventilated area that is free of electrical equipment, flames, or other sources of ignition. The basement is not a suitable storage location if there is a furnace, water heater, or clothes dryer. Never smoke around a portable gas container.

Struck-by hazards: Quiz

1. When parking a vehicle on an incline at a worksite, use the parking brake and ____ the wheels.
 - A. lock
 - B. chock
 - C. boot
2. A hard hat can protect you from injury caused by _____ hazards.
 - A. Falling/flying object
 - B. Caught-in
 - C. Fire
3. When working around a crane, it is OK to walk beneath the load being lifted if you need to take a shortcut. TRUE or FALSE
4. When constructing masonry walls, don't load equipment beyond its lifting capacity, and use automatic holding devices to support forms in the event a lifting mechanism fails. TRUE or FALSE

Don't fall for it: Floor openings

A floor opening, measuring at least 12 inches (in.) across in its smallest dimension presents a hazard to anyone working or walking nearby; if proper safety measures are not taken, someone could easily fall into or through the hole.

Despite the name, "floor openings" can be present in a floor, deck, or roof and can include a stairway, ladderway, hatchway, and chute opening. Some floor openings like skylights or manholes are permanent while some are only present during construction. Even if temporary, all floor openings must have a railing (i.e., a vertical barrier erected along the edge to prevent someone falling in) or be constantly guarded by someone. The railing must be at least 42 in. high, and it must be anchored such that the completed structure can withstand a load of at least 200 pounds (lb) applied to the top rail. Toeboards should be installed if anyone will be working under the floor opening.

At the jobsite, if you are walking on protective paper or plastic, step carefully because an unprotected hole could be hidden underneath. Also, if working on a roof, don't step onto skylights because many are made of plastic and may not hold your weight.

AGAHYSSIGD
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TASDFLIPNT
RNYHLSPEGY
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ALFTIOETHF
MASONRYONB
ABLEGIAANN
FRNSISISHH

FALLING
FLYING
HARDHAT
INSPECT
MASONRY
SLAB

1. B. Chock. Place a chock (a wedge of sturdy material) against a vehicle's wheels to prevent it from rolling or sliding down an incline at the jobsite.
2. A. Falling/flying object. Even a lightweight object, when travelling at a fast speed, can injure you. Wearing a hard hat can reduce the risk of injury.
3. FALSE. Never walk beneath a load that is being carried by a crane, even if it will save you time. If the load falls on you or swings into you, you can sustain a fatal injury.
4. TRUE. To avoid equipment failure, never overload it. However, failures do happen whether from overloading or power failure), and using a holding device will provide protection in this event.