SaferMe

Demolition toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Demolition.

Download a Demolition toolbox talk pdf

The potential risk of serious injury during demolition projects is high. People at risk include employees, contractors, and the public. Demolition workers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to work safely. Therefore, demolition work should be planned carefully so that all risks can be managed appropriately.

Why run a Demolition Toolbox Talk?

- Prevent unnecessary injury from demolition hazards by improving awareness and training
- Assist with understanding of legislative aspects and standards
- Fewer injuries mean higher productivity

Hazard identification

Common hazards associated with demolition works include:

- Dust
- Noise
- Fire
- Falling/flying debris
- Fall from heights
- Collapse of structure
- Hazardous substances
- Heavy machinery movements

Before starting a job, a site should be inspected for:

- Asbestos-containing materials and other toxic substances, e.g. lead
- Polychlorinated chlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in lighting or electrical fittings
- Persistent organic pollutants (POP) on site
- Flammable substances
- Power lines and other electric cables
- Tensioned concrete structures that might collapse when tensioned wires are cut
- Gas supply lines and other compressed gas sources
- Biological hazards, such as sewage, needles, and animal/ bird faeces
- Underground tanks, pits, and basements
- Unsafe/compromised structures
- Traffic conditions

Asbestos (New Zealand information)

If a structure was constructed pre-2000, or if asbestos has been identified or is likely to be identified, the Asbestos Regulations 2016 require any asbestos or asbestos-containing materials be removed before demolition begins (unless some demolition is required for access).

Note: most countries will have relevant legislation managing the asbestos on demolition sites.

Hierarchy of controls:

To manage hazards, apply the following hierarchy of controls:

- Elimination
- Substitution
- Isolation e.g., fencing off demolition sites and maintaining clear collapse zones.
- Engineering e.g., use of long reach excavators
- Administration e.g., induction, training, safety and demolition plans
- PPE e.g., safety footwear, hard hats

Record keeping and training

Maintain good record keeping, such as pre-demolition checklists, hazard registers, and task analysis/job-safety analysis forms. Make sure staff have the correct licenses and training to use specific plant and tools.

PPE

- Safety glasses, safety helmets, gloves, appropriate footwear
- Respiratory protection
- Hearing protection
- Protective clothing

The PCBU has a duty to train staff in the correct: selection, use, fitting, inspection, maintenance, and storage of PPE.

Respirators should be fit-tested.

Key takeaways:

- *Make sure that there is a demolition plan in place.*
- *Identify all hazards on site and make sure appropriate controls are in place.*
- *Asbestos must be removed.*
- *Make sure workers have the required training, including for PPE.*

See all our toolbox talk topics here

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