



# Weekly Safety Meeting

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## Plumbing Safety

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, maintenance workers, including plumbers, experience more injuries and illnesses than nearly any other occupation. Fortunately, responsible plumbers can avoid the vast majority of these threats by adhering to plumbing safety tips and using proper protective gear.

Even with the best safety planning, there are a lot of hazards on a plumbing job site and accidents do happen. A key part of preventing accidents is simply being aware of the potential dangers.

A plumber installs, repairs, and maintains plumbing fixtures or systems in businesses, industries, or residences. The job may include installation and repair of pipes, fittings, and fixtures, as well as servicing the water supply, waste disposal, and heating systems. Plumbers must also haul supplies, cut, and assemble plumbing materials, and use equipment and tools. Plumbing is a simple name for a job that has a wide variety of duties.

### Plumbing Accidents:

The type, frequency and severity of plumbing accidents varies depending upon what type of sites employees work on, the number of employees working, the number and type of adjacent contractors working on the site, and more. Some of the most common plumbing accidents include:

- Cuts and abrasions;
- Slips, trips, and falls;
- Flying particles into eyes;
- Heat and cold illnesses; and
- Motor vehicle accidents.

### Before a Job:

Prior to beginning any job, it's imperative for plumbers to assess the risks they could potentially confront — regardless of how remote the likelihood of an injury may seem.

During this risk assessment, be sure to abide by the following practices:

- Once you're aware of the job site's address, look up the appropriate plumbing and building codes to discover more details about the location and what the task entails.
- Do your due diligence to find out if the job site contains mold, asbestos, or lead paint. If any of these hazards are present, ensure that the area is cleaned as best as possible prior to tackling the plumbing problem.

- If you think you're likely to encounter obstacles you've never confronted before, complete any training or certification programs before attempting to resolve the issue.

### **During a Job:**

Upon arriving at the job site, there may be some serious health concerns that plumbers need to pay attention to. Here are a few:

Given that plumbing systems are generally out of sight, plumbing technicians are often required to operate in confined spaces in awkward positions with little airflow. To make sure you're not entering an area with toxic fumes or insufficient oxygen, use a portable air monitor to find out if the ambient air is safe.

Considering that slips and falls are the most common cause of accidents that affect plumbers, use attachment points, harnesses, and certified scaffolding for support when working from high locations, and never attempt an outdoor project if the weather conditions are less than favorable.

Plumbers are exposed to raw sewage, rodent droppings, and an array of other unpleasant substances on a near-daily basis. Refrain from touching your face while working on such projects and wash your hands immediately after coming into contact with any substance that seems suspicious.

### **After a Job:**

Once a plumbing issue is resolved, that doesn't necessarily mean the job is complete. Before leaving the worksite and returning home, there are a few more precautions responsible plumbers should take to ensure their safety:

- Clean up any spills or puddles as soon as possible, and use industrial-grade cleaners and disinfectants to sanitize the space.
- Dispose of any dirty rags rather than reusing them and wash your work clothes separately than your regular laundry to avoid cross-contamination. If you drive to work, change out of your dirty clothes before stepping back into your vehicle.
- Use antiseptics to thoroughly clean your tools and equipment and make sure your appliances are always in good working order before using them during any future plumbing projects.

### **Remember:**

The qualified and well-experienced plumber prevents the small or fatal accident and saves his life by following safety precautions.

***BEFORE YOU DO IT...TAKE TIME TO THINK THROUGH IT!!***

