

SAFETY NOTICE FOR UNSKILLED/NON-TRADE VOLUNTEERS REGARDING DEMOLITION AND CLEAN-UP

Hurricane Sandy caused widespread damage to property throughout the New York and New Jersey areas. Volunteers that are not part of a licensed trade group such as carpenters, electricians, or asbestos removal workers, or certified laborers, should not attempt demolition work that includes sheetrock removal, tile removal, tearing down or removing building structures, or the removal of any insulation material.

An assessment of potential hazards or conditions is **necessary** before engaging in Demolition work. There is a potential for exposure to hazardous substances such as asbestos, lead, silica, mold, and other dangerous substances. Identification of these substances requires certification and extensive training. Demolition work **requires** professional expertise or OSHA, EPA, or CDC certified training, as well as wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as hard hats, eye protection, protective work boots, P100 High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter respirators, work gloves, and disposable protective coveralls. The use of heavy equipment such as chainsaws to trim and remove trees also requires specific personal protective equipment and training.

Always assume standing water includes biological and chemical toxins such as lead, asbestos, raw sewage, solvents, and petroleum-based substances.

Suggested clean up activities include discarding damaged furniture, surface cleaning and sanitizing, refuse removal, and general yard work. General health and safety training by certified trainers is recommended in advance of such activities.

SAMPLE HAZARD WARNINGS

Trip/fall hazard: Ensure surfaces are sturdy and level without protruding nails and other sharps. Be aware of slippery wet surfaces and obstacles. Wear hard sole work boots (not dress shoes) to protect against toes being crushed and other hazards. Use proper ladder safety (ex: Set on firm and stable ground, maintain 3-point contact, do not stand on top rung).

Handling Chemicals: Do not open and used chemicals that you are not familiar with. Read and follow Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS- available online from manufacturers) before handling all chemicals, even those you are familiar with. **Do not** mix chemicals, including seeming innocuous cleaning products such as bleach and ammonia. Wear eye protection **always!**

Noise: When working around loud equipment (generators) and power tools (chainsaw), protect your hearing by wearing earplugs. Clean or replace earplugs regularly.

Head injury: Wear **only** ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 compliant hard hats while working in areas with low ceilings, in areas with the possibility of falling debris or where accidental contact with electrical hazards are possible. Inspect hard hats to ensure they are in good condition.

Respiratory protection: Wear P100/HEPA filtering face piece dust masks since there is the potential for exposure to respiratory hazards, including but not limited to nuisance dust, silica laden sand, asbestos, lead paint, and mold. It is recommended that volunteers perform a respirator seal check each time they don a filtering face piece respirator. The user must

adhere to the recommendations of the respirator manufacture as each manufacture may recommend different procedures for ensuring a proper seal. Volunteers with respiratory problems such as asthma **must not use tight fitting respirators**, and a medical evaluation should be made to determine if an individual is physically able to wear this equipment. Respirators **cannot** be used with facial hair because it prevents a proper seal between the respirator and face. Respirators are **only effective** when the seal around your nose, mouth/chin is tight. Training on the use of respirator should include selecting the proper size, proper donning, seal check, proper use, and explanation of the limitations (particles may bypass the seal if not worn properly; don't protect against vapors; not suitable for toxic substances and oxygen deficient environments) of the equipment. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqL1-nPC88o>

Mold and Other Biological Hazards: Hurricane and flood cleanup volunteers should assume that water-damaged buildings, materials or furnishings are contaminated with mold. For protection and safe work practices volunteers should always wear a NIOSH approved respirators when working around mold. The main way that mold gets into people's bodies and affects their health is by breathing it in (inhalation). Porous materials that have been wet for more that 48 hours should be removed and discarded. To clean non-porous surfaces with mold add ¼ cup household bleach to 1 gallon of water for light contamination and 1½ cup of water to 1 gallon of water for heavy contamination. Gloves should also be worn while clean and always work in a well-ventilated area. <http://nycosh.org/index.php?page=Biological>

Other Skin irritants: Wear long sleeve shirts if there will be handling of fiberglass, concrete, or disposable (tyvek) suits if exposure to sewage-contaminated water is likely.

Lifting hazards: Use safe lifting technique to minimize injury to your back. The goal of safe

lifting is to maintain your back's natural posture during the lift. Proper technique includes: (1) *Squat to lift and lower* (2) *Do not bend at the waist* (3) *Keep you low back bowed in while bending over* (4) *Keep the weight as close to you as possible* (5) *Bow your back in and raise up with your head first* (6) *If you must turn, turn with your feet, not your body.* (7) *Never jerk or twist!* (8) *Put the weight down by keeping your low back bowed in* (9) *Keep you feet apart, staggered if possible* (10) *Wear shoes with non-slip soles.*

Electrical/Generator Safety: Never run a portable generator indoors, carbon monoxide gas is lethal when it accumulates indoors. Shut off the generator before refueling. Inspect electric cords to ensure they are free from defect and damage. Be sure to store fuel away from possible ignition sources. Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) when using electrical tools near wet surfaces. Maintain a safe distance away from downed power lines. Have a qualified electrician inspect electrical equipment that has gotten wet before energizing it. Only qualified electrician should attempt any work on electrical components.

Work zone traffic safety: Wear high-visibility clothing and head protection while working on or near moving vehicles. Use proper traffic control devices (cones, signs, barriers), lighting, flaggers and worksite communications to prevent accidents.

Tree trimming/Chain saw safety: The variety and sources of potential injury are great from performing this kind of work. Electrocution, crushed/struck by tree limbs, laceration from chainsaw, and property damage are just of few of the potential hazards. Please DONOT Attempt if you are not properly trained. The following PPE such as chaps, hardhats, face shields, work gloves and earmuffs are needed to prevent or lessen the severity of injuries of individuals using chainsaws.

Before undertaking any projects, refer to:
<http://nycosh.org/index.php?page=hurricane-sandy>