

Toolbox Talk



Demolition

The law says that all demolition, dismantling and structural alteration should be carefully planned and carried out by competent practitioners. There are a number of key issues that we must take into consideration before undertaking demolition works.

What you must consider:

Falls from heights

It is easy whilst undertaking demolition work to forget that you are working from height. During demolition work you can be injured by falling off the edge, through openings, fragile surfaces and partially demolished floors.

It is the duty of your Leader to assess and eliminate or control the risks associated with demolition from heights. If you feel unsure about the work you are carrying out, stop and consult your Leader.

Injury from falling material

Other volunteers and members of the public can be hurt by falling objects from height and structures collapsing. In order to prevent this, safe systems of work need to be put in place.

Safe systems of work:

- Establishing exclusion zones and hard-hat areas, clearly marked and with barriers or hoardings if necessary.
- Covered walkways
- Using high-reach machines
- Reinforcing machine cabs so that drivers are not injured.
- Training and supervising site workers.

Uncontrolled collapse

Before you begin demolition work on a structure you must carry out a full structural survey on the area of demolition taking into account:

- The age of the structure.
- Its previous use.
- The type of construction.
- Nearby buildings or structures.
- The weight of removed material or machinery on floors above ground level.

The method statement for the demolition should identify the sequence required to prevent accidental collapse of the structure.

Hazardous Materials

When undertaking demolition work you should be conscious of the type of materials you are working with. In many older structures you can find materials such as asbestos. In other buildings you could find unidentified drums, microbiological waste and flammable liquids. Dust is likely to be present during demolition.

Always wear the correct PPE when undertaking demolition work and assess the hazards accordingly putting in control measures before and as the job develops. You will have to undertake a dynamic risk assessment. If you are unsure of a material or substance stop and report it to your Leader.

Noise and Vibration

In some cases of demolition you will be using hand tools to complete the job. Vibrating tools must be taken seriously and not used for long periods of time without sufficient breaks. The noise from these tools can also damage a persons hearing and can create a hazardous working environment as workers can't hear each other. In this case other methods of communication can be sought and workers must use the correct Personal Protective Equipment at all times.

Key points:

- Must be carefully planned by a competent person.
- You must be fully aware of the risks and the control measures put in place to reduce the potential risk.
- Correct PPE must be worn at all times.
- If you are unsure about the task, **STOP** and inform your Leader.