



We ARE ALL
made out
of mud

Natural building & youth work

Safety guidelines for working with youth
in the field of natural building

MADEOUTOFMUD.EARTH

CREDITS

We are all Made out of Mud

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Safety guidelines

These guidelines are intended to provide you with the general orientation to safety measures in youth and volunteering projects on Natural Building. You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the contents of this handbook, but please keep in mind that this handbook cannot anticipate every situation.

EVERY PERSON IS A SAFETY LEADER

Safety is everyone's concern. Every participant on a construction site becomes a safety leader the moment he/she arrives. An observer can often see danger better than the worker involved in the project and it is his/her obligation to speak to the worker and the coordinator. Since this kind of activity normally has a high proportion of inexperienced people, everyone must pay particular attention to safety.

Be conscious of the safety of others as well as your own.

Be cautious at all times.

Safety is based on **knowledge, skill and an attitude of care and concern.**

Ask questions. There is a coordinator on each project that can help you identify inherent hazards and instruct you on how to avoid them.

Don't be brave on a working site.

Only work with tools if you are **focused, concentrated and on point.**



PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSIBILITY

Participants in Natural Building projects are often not experienced and should prioritise safety and well-being for themselves and others.

As a participant on a workcamp, Youth Exchange or similar short-term project you should:

- Read all documents given to you.
- Carefully listen the instructions and ask for clarifications whenever needed.
- Wear all the safety gear needed for that situation.
- Don't use tools you are not familiar with your own (ask the coordinator) and don't hesitate to say no if you are not comfortable to use a certain tool.
- Take breaks to rest once you feel too tired to maintain focus and precision.
- Don't feel pressured to finish a project.
- When noticing unsafe behaviours, make sure to warn the person. Don't hesitate in that case to speak up!
- Be aware of your posture when carrying/lifting heavy objects.
- Leave the working space as you found it or even better (**cleaner is safer**).
- Don't be shy to ask the coordinator to repeat, explain, or clarify what you could not understand.

COORDINATORS' RESPONSIBILITY

Whether you are a coordinator of volunteers in projects such as international volunteer workcamps and ESC volunteering teams or Youth Exchanges which involve 10 or more participants, your responsibility regarding safety is high.

As coordinators you should:

- Check if the tools are correct/working properly and prepare the working site in advance.
- Provide the tools and make sure they are maintained.
- Provide safety gear and safety guidelines (these ones) and practicalities of the place.
- Explain which tool is for what.
- Show how to use a tool – **never show if you don't know or did not receive proper instruction from someone else.**
- SAFETY FIRST:
 - not forcing something should be done when not absolutely safe;
 - never force someone to use a tool if they don't feel confident using it;
 - **be there, watch out and help/support;**
 - **STOP the work immediately if something goes in the wrong direction.**

GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE CONSTRUCTION

Be honest about your comfort level, there is no need to be a hero on a construction site. If the thought of working at heights bothers you, stay off ladders.

Think about your task. If you are uncertain about how to accomplish your task or how to operate a tool or piece of equipment, ask a coordinator. If you must use your cell phone, move away from the immediate build area to a safe area until you are finished.

Concentrate on the task at hand. Avoid distractions.

Inspect all power tools, hand tools, ladders and scaffolding. If any unsafe tools or conditions come to your attention contact the supervisor immediately.

Manage your energy level carefully and do not push yourself too much. If you feel tired or weak, ask for a break. Balance social, working and resting parts of your time during the project.

Avoid exposure to direct sun in summer. Use hats, sun protection cream and drink enough water or tea.

Always be sure from where (who) comes the information.

Don't hesitate if someone is watching you and you feel pressure to express it.

Put warning signs on the site. That is another way to ensure that participants will remember or get reminded by safety guidelines.

Stretch in groups before starting the work if possible.

PROPER SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Wear appropriate clothing. This is as important to safety as the proper selection and use of tools. Loose clothing is dangerous around power equipment. Workers should wear boots or closed shoes (if possible thick-soled). Any person wearing sandals or flip-flops will not be allowed to remain on the working site.

Wear helmets. They are available on site and must be worn if anyone is working above you or if it is determined necessary by the coordinator.

Wear protective eyewear. Eyewear is available onsite and should be worn when using power tools or when determined necessary by the coordinator.

Wear dust masks. Dust masks are available onsite and should be worn when installing insulation or in heavy dust situations.

Don't use gloves when you are using rotation devices (power drill).

Protective shoes are important.

If you have long hair keep it tight or cover it.

Jewelry on a working site is not recommended, also long nails can be broken easily.

Use a rope and harness while working on a roof.

POWER TOOLS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL DEVICES

Wait for proper instructions. Each participant should receive instruction before a power tool is used, including what could happen if not used correctly. A coordinator should give instructions to all participants, including experienced do-it-yourselfers.

Check for defects. Check all power tools, switches, cords and plugs. Pay special attention to blade guards and make sure they operate correctly. Under no circumstances you should ever disable a blade guard. Defective tools should not be used and the coordinator should be notified so that they can remove the tool from service immediately.

Examine extension cords. They should be of sufficient size (check with the coordinator) and in good condition. Keep cords out of mud or water and avoid stepping on them.

Observe people when they use power tools.

Always unplug tools when you don't use them.

After use, clean tools and check if there is any defect on it.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

All participants and volunteers should be accorded respect and consideration and feel that a safe and productive environment is provided. Any action or conduct that may discriminate against or harass others is prohibited.

If you feel that you have been harassed you should notify the coordinator of your concerns without delay. Coordinator will investigate all claims of prohibited harassment.

RESOLVING ISSUES WITH OTHERS

As in all workplaces, personal differences may occur among individuals. It is important for volunteers and coordinators that issues are not allowed to fester and detract from your important contribution.

We believe that the quickest way to resolve the issues is to approach the individual(s) involved so that an appropriate solution can be reached. If this initial conversation does not lead to resolution or you feel uncomfortable discussing the matter with the person directly, we ask that you speak with a coordinator or someone else responsible to resolve the matter.

EQUIPMENT AND PROPERTY

Please be respectful of property, tools and equipment. Take good care of tools and supplies so that they remain in good and safe working condition. You can help us keep our costs down with proper use and storage of all tools, equipment and supplies.

Do not forget to return equipment that you or your team have been using clean and in the right place.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS CODE

All volunteers must wear sneakers or boots; open toe shoes, flip flops, being

barefoot and high heels are **prohibited**.

Please refrain from wearing tight fitting, revealing, low cut, shear clothing, or ultra short shorts.

Don't hesitate to use the safety equipment that is available to you.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Volunteering projects and Youth Exchanges are Drug Free places. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of controlled substances is prohibited. At no time is alcohol permitted at the working site.

SMOKING

We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is safe and healthful. Please refrain from using tobacco products at the working site. Tobacco products may not be used while unloading trucks or during other volunteer related tasks.

Smoking on a working site can also lead to fire hazard.

Safety is extremely important to everyone involved with our program. Accidents can be costly in pain and stress to the injured, costly in money and time and at the very last, disruptive.

Please remember that 99% of safety is pure common sense and attitude.

HAND TOOLS

Select the proper tool. Make sure you are using the right tool for the job at hand and make sure it is the proper size. If you are unsure, ask the coordinator.

Check the condition of the tool. Avoid tools with loose handles or tools that are dull. Oil or dirt on a tool can cause it to slip. Make sure the tools are clean.

Hold tools correctly. A hammer should be held at the base of the handle to ensure maximum efficiency, while a knife should be held in such a manner as to allow you to cut away from your body.

Handle and carry all tools with care. Carry only a few tools at a time or carry them in a tool belt with special compartments. Keep sharp or pointed tools pointed away from you. Be conscious of where you lay your tools down. Never lay a hammer down on the slope of a roof or the top of a step ladder.

Use extreme caution with a saw. Never bind a blade, especially a power saw. It can result in a very dangerous bucking action that can cause serious injury. Support what you are cutting in a proper fashion to avoid kickback or to prevent a cut board from falling on someone.

Keep the tool storage organised. Further than saving time and frustrations this also leads to less hazards.

LADDERS

Inspect all ladders before use. If the ladder is unsafe, don't use it. Look for any defects.

Use ladders of proper length. An extension ladder should reach one metre above the work level.

Move your ladder with your work. Don't lean too far. If both of your shoulders are outside the ladder you are leaning too far and an injury could occur.

Set your ladder at the proper angle. For every 1m height the bottom of the ladder should be 25 cm away from the wall. You are at the correct angle if, when you place your toes against the base of the ladder and stand erect, you can reach out and grasp the rung at shoulder height.

Place your ladder on solid footing. Avoid mud or gravel, if there is a risk of the ladder slipping, tie or stake the ladder down. If the ladder is not level, dig the ground out from under the high leg rather than "block up" the other leg. Always face the ladder. Carry tools in a container so that your hands are free to climb.

Be cautious with aluminium ladders. Never use aluminium ladder near electrical lines, in inclement weather or on windy days.

Wear suitable shoes.

Store after using it. Don't leave a ladder with no purpose on the working site.

One person at the time. Ladders are not designed for more than one person. It can lead to injury to many people.

SCAFFOLDING

Use the proper scaffolding. All scaffolding must be designed to support for times the weight of the worker and materials resting on it. Special care should be taken to ensure scaffolding components are compatible.

Inspect scaffolding everyday. When erecting scaffolding, make sure the legs are resting on adequate sills and that the equipment is plumb and level.

Many scaffoldings accidents occur when the walk boards are inadequate or defective. Inspect planking frequently and remove any defective or suspicious pieces.

Install handles if they are not provided. Make sure that no one can fall from the scaffolding.

Consider the slipperiness of the planking!

Clean worksite and tool care.

Maintain a clean worksite. Keeping a neat and organised worksite contributes to efficiency and is important in preventing accidents.

Clean up all rubbish and scrap as you go. Do not allow wood scraps, nails or any trash to pile up. They interfere with work and can be a hazard.

Keep up with tools and equipment that are not being used and return them to the tool container. This protects the tools as well as the workers.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

DO NOT attempt to treat anyone unless you are trained medical staff.

Get help. Notify the coordinator and construction staff immediately.

Get help. If you are hurt and can walk, notify the coordinator immediately.

Get help. If you see someone hurt, notify the coordinator immediately.

Get familiar with the location of the **first aid kits**.

Always keep in mind that something can happen.

Check in the group who has a first aid kit training.

As a coordinator, prevent panic and keep the space around the injured person as clear as possible.

Inform coordinators about any health problems.

