

JAN'22 TOOLBOX TALK – ‘Refocus on Site Safety’

Contributor: Dermot Carey, Director-Safety & Training, CIF

“January may be upon us, and the holidays consigned to memory, though the days are getting brighter, and the new year affords us the opportunity to take stock, to assess what’s important and to set new goals. For all workplaces, the safety of workers must be the foremost consideration.

I would encourage all persons working in construction to keep safe by reviewing the controls put in place to ensure you and your colleagues go home safely”. (Dermot Carey, Director-Safety & Training, CIF)



Contributor’s Shared Advice:

Working at Height – this continues to be the greatest contributor to fatalities and serious injury in construction, mostly from falls of 2-3 metres. It is suggested to:

- Avoid work at height where this is reasonably practicable
- If you must work at height, use work equipment/other measures to prevent falls
- Where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use suitable work equipment/other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall
- Be mindful of the risks when working with Ladders, MEWPS/Scissors lifts, Fragile roofs/ lights, and when working near leading edges
- Undertake risk assessments for all works at height and plan the work.

Mobile Plant/Machinery - according to the Health and Safety Authority, the greatest risk to pedestrians is from vehicles and mobile plant. Where vehicles are operating, the vulnerable group may be co-workers, visitors or members of the public. It is suggested to:

- Ensure that vehicle travel routes are clearly delineated, with enough clearance space between persons and vehicles.
- Where possible, avoid reversing.

Safe Lifting – this includes safe load securing, transportation and unloading/lifting of materials and equipment. It is suggested to:

- Appoint competent persons
- Ensure task-specific risk assessment(s) are undertaken
- Where required, ensure a ‘Lift Plan’ is developed mindful of ground conditions
- Ensure proper rigging methods/equipment are employed
- Inspect/maintain lifting equipment, including safety devices and lifting gear
- Provide a safe exclusion zone beneath a lift
- Consider avoidance of manual handling
- Take precautions to avoid collision with overhead powerlines and buried live services.

COVID-19 – the virus threat remains, particularly for those unvaccinated. COVID-19 can make anyone seriously ill, and for some people, the risk is higher.

- Life during the pandemic is difficult enough, so let’s continue to be considerate of others. Avoid congregating inside and outside of shops, and wear face coverings as required; this will help to keep everyone safe, and our industry at work.