

Working Safely: During Disaster Recovery Efforts

Provided by the
Oklahoma
Department of Labor
Safety Pays
OSHA Consultation
Division

Safety Pays!

The Safety Pays OSHA Consultation Division provides on-site safety and health assistance to employers in a wide variety of industries, including those engaged in construction and disaster recovery efforts. Our services are:

- Confidential
- Non-punative
- Easily tailored to meet your needs
- Free!

Your company could qualify for a \$1,000 tax exemption simply by having a full service safety and/or health consultation.

For more information, please call us at (405) 521-6140 or toll free at 1-888-269-5353. You may also visit us on the web at www.labor.ok.gov or find us at www.facebook.com/OKODOL.

Once the storm has passed, every effort goes into removing debris and rebuilding communities. Recovery efforts, however, expose workers to a variety of hazards that they might not normally encounter. Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace, free from recognized hazards, and while this might seem daunting in a post-disaster setting, it can be done.

The following are some general guidelines that may be applicable to businesses involved in assessing damage, cleaning up debris, and repairing or rebuilding homes and businesses that may have been damaged by the storm's damage.

Among the many hazards workers may face are:

- Falls from heights;
- Cuts and puncture wounds from twisted metal, shattered wood, broken glass, nails and other debris;
- Exposed live electrical parts, including over head power lines, damaged electrical systems in damaged or destroyed buildings, and downed power lines;
- Biological hazards, including: snakes, spiders, scorpions, skunks, dogs, cats, mosquitoes, etc.;
- Heat, dehydration and sunburn;
- Heavy equipment, including back hoes, forklifts, dozers, etc.;

To protect your workers:

- Provide employees with the appropriate protective equipment for the job - safety glasses, hard hats, gloves, visibility vests, and other equipment appropriate to the work being done should be provided;

- Ensure workers wear proper clothing when walking on or near debris, including boots and gloves. Long pants and long sleeves may also be necessary;

- If electrical hazards are identified, stay away, and report them to the proper local authorities and/or utility. Do not dig without calling **Call OKIE** at 811 first;

- Keep back hoes, dozers, cranes, scaffolding, ladders and other equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines at all times;

- Use proper precautions when operating generators, chain saws or other power tools. Ensure employees are trained on safe work practices, refueling procedures for equipment and on proper PPE for the equipment being used;

- Take steps to protect against heat-related illnesses, dehydration and sunburn.

For more information, visit OSHA's emergency response web site at: www.osha.gov Fact Sheets and Quick Cards make great training tools for tool-box safety talks, and can help you plan your work and protect your workers.



We in Oklahoma are all too familiar with the challenges of nature. I encourage diligence in all recovery efforts.

— Labor Commissioner Mark Costello

