

# A Better Choice Staffing

## Landscaping and Horticulture Safety Handbook

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### 1. Introduction

#### • Purpose of the Safety Handbook

This Safety Handbook provides employees of A Better Choice Staffing with a guide to the safety policies, procedures, and practices necessary for a safe working environment in landscaping and horticultural services. Our goal is to prevent workplace accidents, injuries, and illnesses by promoting safety awareness and adherence to OSHA regulations.

#### • Commitment to Safety

At A Better Choice Staffing, our employees are our most value asset. Ensuring their health and safety is our top priority. We are committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace through training, proper equipment, and continuous improvement of our safety practices.

#### • Safety Policy Statement

Our safety policy aims to eliminate or minimize risks associated with our operations. All employees are expected to follow the safety guidelines and procedures outlined in this handbook. Safety is a core value that everyone must uphold.

#### • Safety is a Team Effort

Creating and maintaining a safe work environment is a collective responsibility. Everyone, from management to part-time and seasonal staff, must work together to identify and address potential hazards. Your active participation in our safety program is crucial to its success.

#### • Management Responsibilities:

- Providing a safe work environment and supervision.
- Supplying appropriate tools, equipment, and PPE.
- Ensuring all employees receive proper safety training.
- Conducting regular safety inspections and addressing unsafe conditions.
- Investigating incidents and implementing corrective actions.

#### • Supervisor's Responsibilities:

- Promoting safety awareness and leading by example.
- Ensuring employees are trained on safe work practices.
- Conducting frequent safety inspections.
- Taking prompt corrective action when unsafe conditions or behaviors are observed.
- Investigating and reporting all incidents.

#### • Employee Responsibilities:

- Following all safety policies and procedures.
- Reporting unsafe conditions and practices immediately.
- Keeping work areas clean and orderly.
- Operating equipment only if authorized and trained.
- Reporting all incidents to management immediately and completing incident reports promptly.

#### • What to Do If an Incident Occurs

- Immediate Reporting: Report all incidents, no matter how minor, to your supervisor immediately.
- First Aid and CPR: Perform first aid and CPR only if you are trained. Follow bloodborne pathogens procedures.
- Arranging Transportation: Supervisors will arrange transportation for injured employees to medical facilities.

#### • Emergency Action Plans

- Fire Evacuation: Turn off equipment, use the nearest exit, and assemble in designated area. Do not re-enter until given the all-clear.

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- Severe Weather: Follow supervisor instructions, seek shelter, and wait for the all-clear before resuming work.
- Medical Emergencies: Call 911, provide first aid if trained, and report the situation to a supervisor.

## 2. Employee Safety Responsibilities

### • General Safety Rules

Employees of A Better Choice Staffing must adhere to the following general safety rules to ensure their safety and the safety of their coworkers:

#### • Conduct:

- Horseplay, practical jokes, and other unsafe behaviors are strictly forbidden.
- All employees must work in an injury-free manner, displaying accepted levels of behavior.
- Conduct that places the employee or others at risk, or which threatens or intimidates others, is not tolerated.

#### • Drugs and Alcohol:

- The use and possession of illegal drugs or alcohol on company property or during work hours is strictly prohibited.
- Reporting to work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol is forbidden.

#### • Housekeeping:

- Always keep work areas clean and safe.
- Dispose of trash and waste in approved containers.
- Wipe up spills immediately and put tools and equipment away after use.
- Ensure that aisles, exits, fire extinguishers, emergency equipment, electrical panels, and controls are free of obstruction.

#### • Injury Reporting:

- Report all work-related injuries to your supervisor immediately.
- Follow up with your supervisor after any medical appointments related to a work injury.
- Provide your supervisor with any paperwork received during medical appointments.

### • Reporting Unsafe Conditions

Employees are encouraged to report any unsafe work practices or safety hazards encountered on the job to their supervisor immediately. Prompt reporting helps to ensure that corrective actions are taken to prevent potential accidents or injuries.

### • Incident Reporting Procedures (OSHA Recordkeeping: 29 CFR 1904).

#### • In the event of an incident, the following procedures must be followed:

##### • Immediate Action:

- Report all incidents, no matter how minor, to your supervisor immediately.
- Supervisors must investigate and document all incidents using an Incident Report form.
- Ensure the injured employee receives proper medical attention.

##### • Incident Investigation:

- Supervisors will conduct a thorough investigation to determine the root cause of the incident.
- The injured employee will participate in the investigation and provide necessary information.

##### • Corrective Actions:

- Based on the investigation, appropriate corrective actions will be implemented to prevent recurrence.
- Supervisors will monitor the effectiveness of the corrective actions.

##### • Documentation:

- All incident reports and related documentation will be maintained in personnel files.
- Records of training, certifications, hazard identification, and corrective actions will be kept up to date.

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### • Return to Work Program

A Better Choice Staffing is committed to assisting employees who have been injured on the job to return to work as soon as possible. Our Return-to-Work Program includes the following elements:

- **Immediate Reporting:**
  - All work-related injuries must be reported to your supervisor immediately, no later than the end of the shift.
  - Complete and sign a Report of Injury or Illness form.
- **Medical Treatment:**
  - Seek medical treatment and obtain a Return-to-Work Evaluation form from the treating physician.
  - Submit the Return-to-Work Evaluation form to Human Resources by the next business day.
- **Transitional or Light Duty Work:**
  - Temporary light duty work is available for up to sixty (60) days, with progress reviews every 30 days.
  - Transitional or light duty work beyond sixty (60) days, up to a maximum of six (6) months, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- **Return to Regular Duty:**
  - Employees must submit a Return-to-Work form confirming full duty capability.
  - Permanent restrictions will be evaluated to determine if the employee can perform essential job functions.
- **Communication:**
  - Injured employees must keep the company informed of their status on a weekly basis.
  - Failure to communicate status updates may result in a reduction of benefits and disciplinary action.

## 3. Safety Orientation and Training

### • Safety Orientation Training

A Better Choice Staffing is committed to providing comprehensive safety orientation and training for all employees. This training is essential for ensuring a safe work environment and compliance with OSHA standards. The following topics will be covered during the safety orientation:

- **Company-Specific Accident and Incident Data**
  - Review of past accidents and incidents.
  - Lessons learned and preventive measures implemented.
- **Hazards Associated with the Work Area**
  - Identification of common hazards in landscaping and horticultural work.
  - Strategies for mitigating these hazards.
- **Hazards Associated with Specific Job Tasks**
  - Detailed discussion of risks associated with particular tasks.
  - Safe practices to follow for each task.
- **Operation of Specific Equipment**
  - Training on the safe use of equipment such as mowers, trimmers, and power tools.
  - Inspection and maintenance procedures.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.132 - 1910.138)**
  - Types of PPE are required for various tasks.
  - Proper use, care, and maintenance of PPE.
- **Emergency Procedures**
  - Steps to take in the event of an emergency (fire, severe weather, medical emergencies).
  - Location of emergency exits, first aid kits, and emergency contact numbers.
- **Employee Accident Reporting Requirements**
  - Procedures for reporting accidents and near-misses.
  - Importance of prompt reporting for effective incident management.

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- **Return to Work Program**
  - Overview of the company's return to work program for injured employees.
  - Procedures for medical evaluations and light-duty assignments.
- **OSHA Required Training**
  - Any additional OSHA-required training specific to the job.

- **Periodic Safety Inspections**

To maintain a safe working environment, periodic safety inspections will be conducted. These inspections aim to identify potential hazards and ensure compliance with safety protocols.

- **Inspection Schedule**
  - Regularly scheduled inspections (monthly, quarterly).
  - Unannounced spot checks.
- **Inspection Areas**
  - Work areas, equipment, and tools.
  - Storage areas for chemicals and PPE.
  - Emergency exits and first aid stations.
- **Inspection Procedures**
  - Checklists are to be utilized to promote comprehensive inspections.
  - Documentation of findings and corrective actions taken.
- **Employee Involvement**
  - Encouragement of employee participation in safety inspections.
  - Reporting of hazards and suggestions for improvements.

- **Safety Meetings and Communication**

Effective communication is crucial for maintaining a culture of safety. Regular safety meetings will be held to discuss safety-related topics and address employee concerns.

- **Safety Meeting Schedule**
  - Weekly toolbox talks.
  - Monthly safety committee meetings.
- **Meeting Agenda**
  - Review of recent incidents and near-misses.
  - Discussion of upcoming projects and associated hazards.
  - Training on new safety procedures or equipment.
- **Documentation**
  - Minutes of safety meetings will be recorded and maintained.
  - Action items and follow-up tasks will be tracked.
- **Communication Channels**
  - Use of bulletin boards, newsletters, and emails to disseminate safety information.
  - Open-door policy for employees to report safety concerns and suggestions.

## 4. Emergency Action Plans

- **Fire Evacuation Procedures**
  - **Steps to Follow in Case of Fire:**
  - **Alert Others:**
    - Shout "Fire!" to alert those nearby.
    - Activate the nearest fire alarm pull station.

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- **Call 911:**
  - Provide the dispatcher with the address, nature of the fire, and your contact information.
- **Evacuate the Building:**
  - Leave immediately using the nearest exit.
  - Do not use elevators.
  - Assist those who need help if it is safe to do so.
- **Close Doors:**
  - Close doors behind you to contain the fire.
- **Assemble at Designated Area:**
  - Gather at the pre-determined assembly point.
  - Supervisors will account for all personnel.
- **Wait for the All-Clear:**
  - Do not re-enter the building until instructed by fire department officials.
- **Severe Weather Procedures**
  - **During a Severe Weather Alert:**
    - **Monitor Weather Alerts:**
      - Supervisors should monitor weather alert radios and apps.
    - **Issue Warnings:**
      - If severe weather is imminent, notify all employees via public address systems or alarms.
    - **Seek Shelter:**
      - Move to the designated storm shelter areas (interior rooms, basements, or other safe areas).
      - Avoid windows and exterior walls.
    - **Stay Informed:**
      - Continue to monitor weather reports.
      - Do not leave the shelter until the all-clear is given.
- **Medical Emergency Procedures**
  - **Steps to Follow in Case of Medical Emergency:**
    - **Assess the Situation:**
      - Ensure the area is safe for you to approach.
      - Determine the severity of the injury or illness.
    - **Call 911:**
      - Provide clear information about the nature of the emergency and the location.
    - **Provide First Aid:**
      - Only if you are trained, administer first aid or CPR.
      - Use personal protective equipment (PPE) to avoid contact with bodily fluids.
    - **Stay with the Victim:**
      - Remain with the injured person until help arrives.
      - Keep the victim calm and comfortable.
    - **Guide Emergency Responders:**
      - Send someone to meet the emergency responders and guide them to the victim's location.
- **Emergency Contact Information**
  - **Important Contacts:**
    - **Fire Department: 911**
    - **Police Department: 911**
    - **Emergency Medical Services (Ambulance): 911**
    - **Nearest Hospital: [Insert Name], [Insert Address], [Insert Phone Number]**
    - **Company Contacts:**
      - Safety Coordinator: [Name], [Phone Number]
      - Site Supervisor: [Name], [Phone Number]

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- Human Resources: [Name], [Phone Number]

### 5. OSHA Compliance Programs

- **Hazard Communication** (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1200) [[GHS Pictograms poster](#)]

- **Employee Right to Know**

Employees of A Better Choice Staffing have the right to know about the chemicals they work with, including their hazards and safe handling procedures. This is ensured through comprehensive training and accessible safety data sheets.

- **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)**

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are provided for each chemical used in the workplace. MSDS contains detailed information about the chemicals, including hazards, safe handling, and emergency measures. Employees must familiarize themselves with the MSDS for the chemicals they use.

- **Labeling of Chemical Containers**

All chemical containers must be properly labeled to identify their contents and hazards. Labels should include the chemical name, hazard warnings, and the manufacturer's information. It is crucial to never use a chemical from an unlabeled container.

- **General Rules for Handling Chemicals**

- Always read label warnings and instructions.
      - Use the minimum amount of chemical needed.
      - Avoid skin and eye contact by wearing appropriate PPE.
      - Ensure good ventilation when using chemicals.
      - Wash hands thoroughly after handling chemicals.

- **Bloodborne Pathogens**

- **Potential Exposure Scenarios**

Employees may encounter bloodborne pathogens through injuries, accidents, or when handling contaminated materials. It is essential to follow strict protocols to prevent exposure.

- **Precautionary Measures**

- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and face shields when dealing with blood or bodily fluids.
      - Dispose of contaminated materials in designated biohazard containers.
      - Immediately clean and disinfect any surfaces contaminated with blood.

- **Procedures for Handling Contaminated Materials**

- Avoid direct contact with contaminated materials.
      - Use tools such as tongs or dustpans to handle sharp objects.
      - Follow proper disposal procedures for biohazard waste.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.132 - 1910.138) [[PPE matrix chart](#)]

- **Eye and Face Protection**

Employees must wear safety glasses, goggles, or face shields when working with chemicals, power tools, or any task that poses a risk to the eyes or face.

- **Head Protection**

Hard hats must be worn in areas where there is a risk of head injury from falling objects or where required by site-specific safety protocols.

- **Hearing Protection**

Ear protection such as earplugs or earmuffs must be used in high-noise environments to prevent hearing damage.

- **Respiratory Protection**

Respirators must be used in environments with harmful dust, fumes, vapors, or gases. Employees must be fit-tested and trained in the proper use and maintenance of respirators.

- **Foot and Hand Protection**



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Sturdy, slip-resistant footwear must be worn to prevent foot injuries. Gloves suitable for the task (e.g., chemical-resistant, cut-resistant) must be worn to protect hands.

- **Outerwear Protection**

Wear appropriate clothing for the job, avoiding loose or torn clothing that can get caught in machinery. Protective outerwear such as aprons or coveralls should be used when dealing with hazardous materials.

- **Lockout/Tagout Procedures** (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.147) [[Lockout/Tagout tag sample](#)]

- **Purpose and Scope**

The lockout/tagout procedure is designed to protect employees from accidental startup of machinery or release of hazardous energy during maintenance or repair work.

- **Lockout/Tagout Devices**

Lockout devices physically prevent the operation of equipment, while tagout devices are warning tags that indicate the equipment is being serviced and should not be operated.

- **Procedures for Applying and Removing Lockout/Tagout Devices**

- Notify all affected employees of the lockout/tagout procedure.
      - Shut down the equipment and isolate it from its energy source.
      - Apply the lockout/tagout devices.
      - Verify that the energy has been isolated.
      - Perform the necessary maintenance or repairs.
      - Remove lockout/tagout devices and notify affected employees once the work is completed.

- **Confined Space Entry**

- **Identification of Confined Spaces**

Confined spaces are areas not meant for continuous human occupancy, with limited entry and exit points, and may contain hazardous conditions. Examples include tanks, silos, and manholes.

- **Permit Requirements**

Entry into confined spaces requires a permit that verifies the space has been tested for hazards and is safe for entry. Only trained and authorized personnel may enter confined spaces.

- **Safety Procedures for Entry and Exit**

- Conduct a hazard assessment before entry.
      - Use ventilation to eliminate or control hazardous atmospheres.
      - Monitor the atmosphere continuously during entry.
      - Ensure proper use of PPE.
      - Maintain communication with workers inside the confined space.

- **Respiratory Protection**

- **Types of Respirators**

- Air-Purifying Respirators (APRs): Remove contaminants from the air.
    - Powered Air-Purifying Respirators (PAPRs): Use a fan to draw air through filters.
    - Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA): Provide clean air from a portable tank.

- **Fit Testing**

Employees must undergo fit testing to ensure their respirator fits properly and provides an effective seal. Fit testing should be conducted annually and whenever a different respirator model is used.

- **Maintenance and Care of Respirators**

- Clean and disinfect respirators after each use.
    - Store respirators in a clean, dry place.

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- Inspect respirators for damage before each use.

### 6. General Safety Precautions

- **Housekeeping:** Maintaining a clean and organized work area is essential for safety in landscaping and horticulture. This includes:
  - **Daily Cleaning:** Employees must clean their work areas at the end of each day. All tools and materials should be properly stored.
  - **Debris Removal:** Remove all debris, such as leaves, branches, and grass clippings, from pathways and work areas to prevent slips and trips.
  - **Proper Storage:** Store all tools, chemicals, and equipment in their designated areas. Ensure that materials are stacked safely and not blocking exits or walkways.
  - **Spill Control:** Immediately clean up any spills, especially oil and chemical spills, to prevent slipping hazards. Use appropriate spill kits and follow proper disposal procedures for hazardous materials.
- **Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention:** Slips, trips, and falls are common hazards in landscaping and horticulture. To prevent these incidents:
  - **Footwear:** Wear appropriate, slip-resistant footwear with good tread to prevent slipping on wet or uneven surfaces.
  - **Pathway Maintenance:** Keep pathways clear of tools, hoses, and debris. Ensure that walkways are well-lit and free from obstructions.
  - **Ladder Safety:** Use ladders correctly. Ensure that they are stable and positioned on firm ground. Do not overreach or stand on the top rung.
  - **Elevated Surfaces:** Use guardrails and toe boards on elevated work areas. Secure tools and materials to prevent them from falling.
- **Lifting Techniques:** Proper lifting techniques are crucial to prevent back injuries and strains. Employees should:
  - **Assess the Load:** Test the weight of the load before lifting. If it is too heavy, ask for help or use lifting equipment.
  - **Proper Stance:** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, one foot slightly ahead of the other for balance.
  - **Bend at the Knees:** Keep your back straight and bend at the knees, not the waist.
  - **Firm Grip:** Get a good grip on the object, using both hands. Hold the load close to your body.
  - **Lift Smoothly:** Lift slowly and smoothly, using your leg muscles. Avoid twisting your body while lifting.
  - **Set Down Safely:** Lower the load by bending your knees and keeping your back straight.
- **Ladder and Stepladder Safety:** Using ladders and stepladders safely is critical in landscaping and horticulture work:
  - **Inspection:** Inspect ladders before each use for any damage or defects.
  - **Setup:** Set up ladders on stable, level ground. Ensure the ladder's base is secure and the ladder is fully extended and locked in place.
  - **Angle:** Place the ladder at a safe angle (1:4 ratio – one foot out for every four feet up).
  - **Three Points of Contact:** Maintain three points of contact (two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand) while climbing.
  - **Load Limits:** Do not exceed the ladder's maximum load rating. Avoid carrying heavy or bulky items while climbing.
- **Heat and Cold Stress Prevention** (OSHA Technical Manual - Section III: Chapter 4) [Insert visual: Heat stress symptoms chart]
  - **Exposure to extreme temperatures can cause heat stress or cold stress:**
    - **Heat Stress Prevention:**
      - Hydration: Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid caffeinated or sugary drinks.
      - Rest Breaks: Take regular breaks in shaded or cool areas.
      - Clothing: Wear light, breathable clothing. Use hats and sunscreen to protect against sun exposure.
      - Acclimatization: Gradually increase workloads and exposure time to hot environments.
    - **Cold Stress Prevention:**
      - Layering: Wear multiple layers of clothing to trap body heat. Use hats, gloves, and insulated boots.
      - Dry Clothing: Keep clothing dry. Change wet clothes immediately.
      - Warm Breaks: Take breaks in heated areas. Drink warm fluids.
- **Violence in the Workplace:** A safe workplace is free from violence and threats:
  - **Zero Tolerance Policy:** A Better Choice Staffing has a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence. This includes verbal threats, physical assaults, and harassment.
  - **Reporting:** Employees must report any acts or threats of violence to their supervisor immediately. Use the incident reporting procedures outlined in this handbook.
  - **Security Measures:** Follow all security measures, including badge access and visitor sign-in procedures. Report on any suspicious activity to management.

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### 7. Job-Specific Safety Precautions

#### • Lawn and Landscape Maintenance

Lawn and landscape maintenance tasks involve various hazards that require specific safety precautions.

##### • Mowing:

- Inspect the mower before use, ensuring all guards and safety devices are in place.
- Wear appropriate PPE, including safety glasses, gloves, and hearing protection.
- Clear the area of debris before mowing.
- Never leave the mower running while unattended.
- Use caution when mowing on slopes to prevent rollovers.

##### • Pruning and Trimming:

- Use appropriate tools for the task and ensure they are in good condition.
- Wear gloves, safety glasses, and hearing protection.
- Do not overreach; use ladders or lift devices for high branches.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially power lines.

##### • Fertilizing and Pesticide Application:

- Read and follow the instructions on the product label.
- Wear appropriate PPE, including gloves, safety glasses, and respirators.
- Mix and apply chemicals in well-ventilated areas.
- Store chemicals in their original containers and in designated storage areas.
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling chemicals.

##### • Leaf Blowing and General Clean-Up:

- Wear safety glasses and hearing protection.
- Direct the blower nozzle away from people, animals, and open windows.
- Avoid using leaf blowers in dusty conditions to prevent inhalation of particles.

#### • Soil Preparation and Grading

Soil preparation and grading involve the use of heavy equipment and manual labor, which can pose various hazards.

##### • Equipment Operation:

- Only trained and authorized personnel may operate heavy equipment.
- Conduct pre-operation inspections to ensure the equipment is in safe working condition.
- Wear appropriate PPE, including hard hats, safety boots, and high-visibility clothing.
- Keep a safe distance from operating machinery and do not enter the operator's blind spot.

##### • Manual Labor:

- Use proper lifting techniques to prevent back injuries.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands from blisters and cuts.
- Be aware of your footing on uneven terrain to prevent slips, trips, and falls.

#### • Irrigation

Irrigation tasks involve the installation and maintenance of water systems, which can pose risks of electrical hazards, chemical exposure, and physical injury.

##### • Trenching and Excavation:

- Call for utility locates before digging to avoid underground utilities.
- Use appropriate shoring or trench boxes to prevent cave-ins.
- Keep a safe distance from the edges of trenches and excavations.

##### • Glue and Primer Hazards:

- Use PPE such as gloves and safety glasses when handling adhesives and primers.
- Work in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes.
- Store adhesives and primers in designated areas away from heat sources.

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- **Electrical Safety:**

- Use insulated tools and equipment when working near electrical sources.
- Shut off the power supply before performing any electrical work.
- Keep water away from electrical equipment to prevent shock.

- **Hardscape Construction**

Hardscape construction involves building structures like retaining walls, patios, and walkways, which can pose risks of physical injury, equipment hazards, and ergonomic issues.

- **Equipment Safety:**

- Inspect equipment, such as saws and mixers, before use.
- Wear appropriate PPE, including safety glasses, gloves, and hearing protection.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for safe operation.

- **Lifting and Carrying:**

- Use proper lifting techniques to prevent back injuries.
- Use mechanical aids or get assistance when lifting heavy materials.
- Store materials securely to prevent shifting or collapsing.

- **Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention:**

- Keep work areas clean and free of debris.
- Use caution when working on uneven surfaces.
- Wear appropriate footwear with good traction.

- **Planting - Trees, Shrubs, Lawn**

Planting tasks involve physical labor and the use of tools, which can pose risks of injury.

- **Tool Safety:**

- Inspect tools before use to ensure they are in good condition.
- Use the right tool for the job to prevent accidents.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands from blisters and cuts.

- **Lifting and Transporting Plants:**

- Use proper lifting techniques to prevent back injuries.
- Get assistance when moving large plants or trees.
- Secure plants properly during transport to prevent movement.

- **Heat Stress Prevention:**

- Stay hydrated and take breaks in shaded areas.
- Wear lightweight, breathable clothing.
- Monitor for signs of heat exhaustion, such as dizziness or nausea, and seek help if needed.

- **Tree Care**

Tree care involves tasks such as pruning, trimming, and removal, which can pose risks of falls, equipment hazards, and electrical hazards.

- **Climbing Safety:**

- Use proper climbing equipment and techniques.
- Inspect climbing gear before use to ensure it is in good condition.
- Securely tie-in with a safety harness at all times.

- **Chainsaw Safety:**

- Inspect chainsaws before use to ensure they are in good condition.
- Wear appropriate PPE, including chainsaw chaps, safety glasses, and hearing protection.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for safe operation.

- **Electrical Hazards:**

- Maintain a safe distance from power lines when working with trees.
- Use insulated tools and equipment when working near electrical sources.
- Shut off the power supply if possible before starting work near power lines.

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- **Falling Object Prevention:**

- Establish a drop zone and keep bystanders clear of the area.
- Use ropes and pulleys to safely lower large branches.
- Communicate with team members to ensure everyone is aware of potential hazards.

- **Vehicle Operation**

Operating vehicles, including trucks and trailers, requires adherence to safety protocols to prevent accidents and injuries.

- **Driver Training:**

- Only authorized and trained employees may operate company vehicles.
- Complete driver safety training and maintain a valid driver's license.

- **Vehicle Inspections:**

- Conduct pre-trip inspections to ensure the vehicle is in safe working condition.
- Check brakes, lights, tires, and other critical components.

- **Safe Driving Practices:**

- Obey all traffic laws and speed limits.
- Always wear seat belts.
- Avoid distractions, such as using a cell phone while driving.

- **Loading and Unloading:**

- Ensure loads are properly secured to prevent shifting during transport.
- Use caution when loading and unloading heavy or awkward items.
- Use mechanical aids or get assistance when necessary.

## 8. Hazard Identification and Control

- **Overview**

Hazard identification and control are critical components of maintaining a safe work environment. This section outlines common hazards in landscaping and horticulture and provides guidelines for controlling these hazards to ensure the safety of all employees.

- **Cuts and Amputations**

Cuts and amputations can occur when using sharp tools and machinery. The following precautions can help prevent these injuries:

- **Tool Maintenance:**

- Keep all cutting tools, such as chainsaws, pruners, and mowers, sharp and in good condition.
- Regularly inspect tools for damage and replace them as needed.

- **Proper Use of Tools:**

- Use tools only for their intended purpose.
- Follow manufacturer instructions and safety guidelines.
- Wear appropriate PPE, such as gloves, safety glasses, and protective clothing.

- **Training:**

- Provide training on the safe use of cutting tools and equipment.
- Ensure that only trained and authorized personnel use power tools and machinery.

- **Work Area Safety:**

- Keep the work area clean and free of obstructions.
- Secure tools when not in use to prevent accidental contact.

- **Electrical Hazards**

Electrical hazards can result from contact with power lines, faulty wiring, and improper use of electrical equipment. The following guidelines can help prevent electrical injuries:

- **Inspect Equipment:**

- Regularly inspect electrical tools and equipment for damage.
- Ensure that all electrical equipment is properly grounded.

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- **Use of PPE:**

- Wear insulated gloves and boots when working with electrical equipment.
- Use insulated tools when working near electrical sources.

- **Safe Work Practices:**

- De-energize electrical equipment before performing maintenance.
- Keep a safe distance from overhead power lines.
- Use lockout/tagout procedures to ensure equipment remains de-energized during maintenance.

- **Training:**

- Provide training on electrical safety and proper use of electrical equipment.
- Ensure employees understand the risks and safety procedures for working near electricity.

- **Ergonomics**

Ergonomic hazards can lead to musculoskeletal injuries caused by repetitive motion, awkward postures, and overexertion. The following practices can help reduce ergonomic risks:

- **Proper Lifting Techniques:**

- Use proper lifting techniques to prevent back injuries.
- Bend at the knees, not the waist, and lift with your legs.

- **Workstation Setup:**

- Arrange tools and equipment to minimize reaching and bending.
- Use adjustable equipment to ensure proper posture.

- **Task Variation:**

- Rotate tasks to prevent repetitive motion injuries.
- Take regular breaks to rest and stretch muscles.

- **Training:**

- Provide training on ergonomic principles and safe work practices.
- Encourage employees to report ergonomic concerns and seek adjustments as needed.

- **Motor Vehicles**

Motor vehicle accidents can result from improper use of company vehicles. The following guidelines can help prevent such accidents:

- **Driver Training:**

- Only authorized and trained employees may operate company vehicles.
- Complete driver safety training and maintain a valid driver's license.

- **Vehicle Inspections:**

- Conduct pre-trip inspections to ensure the vehicle is in safe working condition.
- Check brakes, lights, tires, and other critical components.

- **Safe Driving Practices:**

- Obey all traffic laws and speed limits.
- Always wear seat belts.
- Avoid distractions, such as using a cell phone while driving.

- **Loading and Unloading:**

- Ensure loads are properly secured to prevent shifting during transport.
- Use caution when loading and unloading heavy or awkward items.
- Use mechanical aids or get assistance when necessary.

- **Noise**

Exposure to high levels of noise can cause hearing loss. The following measures can help protect employees from noise hazards:

- **Hearing Protection:**

- Provide hearing protection, such as earplugs or earmuffs, for employees working in noisy environments.
- Ensure that hearing protection fits properly and is used correctly.

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- **Noise Monitoring:**

- Conduct regular noise level assessments in the workplace.
- Implement engineering controls, such as sound barriers, to reduce noise levels.

- **Training:**

- Provide training on the importance of hearing protection and how to use it properly.
- Educate employees on the risks of noise exposure and how to recognize early signs of hearing loss.

- **Pesticides and Chemicals**

Exposure to pesticides and chemicals can cause serious health issues. The following guidelines can help prevent exposure:

- **Proper Handling:**

- Read and follow the instructions on the product label.
- Use appropriate PPE, such as gloves, safety glasses, and respirators.
- Mix and apply chemicals in well-ventilated areas.

- **Storage:**

- Store chemicals in their original containers and in designated storage areas.
- Keep chemicals away from heat sources and out of reach of unauthorized personnel.

- **Spill Management:**

- Have spill kits readily available in areas where chemicals are used or stored.
- Follow proper procedures for cleaning up spills to minimize exposure.

- **Training:**

- Provide training on the safe handling, storage, and disposal of chemicals.
- Ensure employees understand the risks associated with the chemicals they use and know the emergency procedures for spills and exposure.

## 9. Equipment Safety

- **Powered Mowing Equipment**

Powered mowing equipment, such as lawnmowers and trimmers, pose several risks. Follow these guidelines to ensure safe operation:

- **Pre-Operation Inspection:**

- Check for loose, damaged, or missing parts.
- Ensure all safety guards are in place and functional.
- Verify that blades are sharp and securely attached.

- **Safe Operation:**

- Wear appropriate PPE, including safety glasses, gloves, and hearing protection.
- Do not operate equipment in wet conditions to avoid slipping.
- Maintain a safe distance from others while operating the equipment.
- Always push the mower forward; do not pull it backward.

- **Refueling and Maintenance:**

- Turn off the engine and let it cool before refueling.
- Store fuel in approved containers and away from ignition sources.
- Perform regular maintenance according to the manufacturer's instructions.

- **Hand and Power Tools**

Hand and power tools can cause serious injuries if not used properly. Follow these guidelines to ensure safe use:

- **Tool Selection:**

- Use the right tool for the job to prevent misuse.
- Ensure tools are in good condition and appropriate for the task.

- **Inspection:**

- Inspect tools before each use for signs of damage or wear.
- Replace or repair damaged tools immediately.

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- **Safe Use:**

- Follow manufacturer instructions and safety guidelines.
- Wear appropriate PPE, such as gloves and safety glasses.
- Keep hands and body parts away from moving parts.
- Disconnect power tools from the power source when not in use.

- **Motor Vehicle Operation**

Operating vehicles, including trucks and trailers, requires adherence to safety protocols to prevent accidents and injuries.

- **Driver Training:**

- Only authorized and trained employees may operate company vehicles.
- Complete driver safety training and maintain a valid driver's license.

- **Vehicle Inspections:**

- Conduct pre-trip inspections to ensure the vehicle is in safe working condition.
- Check brakes, lights, tires, and other critical components.

- **Safe Driving Practices:**

- Obey all traffic laws and speed limits.
- Use seat belts at all times.
- Avoid distractions, such as using a cell phone while driving.

- **Loading and Unloading:**

- Ensure loads are properly secured to prevent shifting during transport.
- Use caution when loading and unloading heavy or awkward items.
- Use mechanical aids or get assistance when necessary.

- **Heavy Equipment Operation**

Operating heavy equipment, such as backhoes and excavators, involves significant risks. Follow these guidelines to ensure safe operation:

- **Pre-Operation Inspection:**

- Check all fluid levels, hoses, and tires.
- Ensure that all safety devices, such as seat belts and roll-over protection systems, are functional.

- **Safe Operation:**

- Only trained and authorized personnel may operate heavy equipment.
- Wear appropriate PPE, including hard hats and steel-toed boots.
- Maintain awareness of your surroundings and use spotters when necessary.
- Do not exceed the equipment's load capacity.

- **Shutdown Procedures:**

- Park equipment on level ground.
- Lower all attachments to the ground and engage parking brakes.
- Turn off the engine and remove the key.

- **Electrical Powered Tools**

Electrical powered tools pose risks of electric shock and injury. Follow these guidelines to ensure safe use:

- **Inspection:**

- Inspect electrical tools for damage before use.
- Ensure cords and plugs are in good condition.

- **Grounding:**

- Use tools with a three-prong plug and connect them to a grounded outlet.
- Use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) in wet or damp environments.

- **Safe Use:**

- Keep cords away from heat, oil, and sharp edges.
- Disconnect tools when not in use or when changing accessories.
- Do not carry tools by their cords.



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- **Compressed Gas Cylinders – Storage and Handling**

Compressed gas cylinders can be hazardous if not handled properly. Follow these guidelines for safe storage and handling:

- **Storage:**
  - Store cylinders upright and secure them with chains or straps.
  - Keep cylinders away from heat sources and flammable materials.
  - Store different types of gases separately to prevent hazardous reactions.
- **Handling:**
  - Use appropriate carts or dollies to transport cylinders.
  - Do not drag, roll, or drop cylinders.
  - Ensure the valve protection cap is in place when the cylinder is not in use.
- **Usage:**
  - Open cylinder valves slowly to control the release of gas.
  - Use the correct regulator and check for leaks before use.
  - Never use cylinders for any purpose other than their intended use.

## 10. Recordkeeping and Documentation

- **Overview**

Accurate recordkeeping and documentation are essential for compliance with OSHA regulations and for maintaining a safe workplace. Proper records provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of safety programs, identifying trends, and ensuring that all necessary actions are taken to protect employees.

- **Training Records**

Maintaining comprehensive training records ensures that all employees have received the necessary safety training.

- **Training Documentation:**
  - Record the dates, topics, and attendees of all training sessions.
  - Include documentation of initial orientation training, ongoing training, and refresher courses.
  - Maintain records of certifications and qualifications obtained by employees.
- **Access to Training Records:**
  - Employees have the right to access their own training records.
  - Training records should be kept up to date and stored securely.
- **Retention Period:**
  - Keep training records for a minimum of five years or as required by OSHA standards.

- **Incident Reports**

Documenting all workplace incidents, including near misses, is crucial for identifying hazards and preventing future accidents.

- **Incident Reporting Procedures:** (OSHA Recordkeeping: 29 CFR 1904) [[Incident reporting workflow diagram](#)]
  - Report all incidents, no matter how minor, to your supervisor immediately.
  - Complete an Incident Report form detailing the nature of the incident, individuals involved, and any witnesses.

**Incident Investigation:**

- Conduct a thorough investigation to determine the root cause of the incident.
- Implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence.
- Document the findings and actions taken.
- **Retention Period:**
  - Keep incident reports for at least five years.

- **Hazard Identification and Corrective Actions**

Keeping records of identified hazards and the actions taken to correct them helps ensure a safe working environment.

- **Hazard Identification:**
  - Document all identified hazards in the workplace.
  - Include details such as the location, nature of the hazard, and potential risks.

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- **Corrective Actions:**

- Record the corrective actions taken to address each identified hazard.
- Monitor and document the effectiveness of these actions.

- **Retention Period:**

- Keep records of hazard identification and corrective actions for a minimum of five years.

- **Equipment Inspections and Maintenance**

Regular inspections and maintenance of equipment are essential for preventing accidents and ensuring safe operation.

- **Inspection Records:**

- Document the dates and results of all equipment inspections.
- Include details of any defects found and repairs made.

- **Maintenance Records:**

- Keep records of all maintenance activities, including routine maintenance and repairs.
- Include the date, description of work performed, and the name of the person who performed the maintenance.

- **Retention Period:**

- Retain inspection and maintenance records for at least five years.

- **Safety Meetings and Communication**

Documenting safety meetings and communications ensures that all employees are informed about safety policies and procedures.

- **Meeting Documentation:**

- Record the dates, attendees, and topics discussed at all safety meetings.
- Include minutes of the meetings and any decisions made.

- **Safety Communications:**

- Keep records of all safety communications, such as memos, emails, and notices.
- Document the distribution and receipt of these communications by employees.

- **Retention Period:**

- Maintain records of safety meetings and communications for a minimum of five years.

- **Medical and Exposure Records**

Maintaining accurate medical and exposure records helps protect employees' health and comply with OSHA regulations.

- **Medical Records:**

- Keep records of medical examinations, treatments, and evaluations related to work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Ensure confidentiality and restrict access to authorized personnel only.

- **Exposure Records:**

- Document any exposure to hazardous substances, including the date, duration, and level of exposure.
- Include records of any medical monitoring or testing related to the exposure.

- **Retention Period:**

- Retain medical and exposure records for at least 30 years, as required by OSHA.

- **Employee Acknowledgment Form**

All employees must acknowledge that they have received and understood the safety policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

- **Acknowledgment Process:**

- Provide employees with a copy of the safety handbook.
- Review the contents of the handbook with employees during orientation and training sessions.

- **Acknowledgment Form:**

- Have employees sign an acknowledgment form stating they have received, read, and understood the safety policies and procedures.
- Keep the signed acknowledgment form in the employee's personnel file.

- **Retention Period:**

- Maintain acknowledgment forms for the duration of the employee's employment plus five years.

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### 11. Biological Exposure Control Plan

- **Exposure to Blood and Other Bodily Fluids**

Landscaping and horticulture work can involve exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other bodily fluids. To protect employees from these hazards, A Better Choice Staffing has established the following procedures:

- **Hand Hygiene:** Employees must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after any potential exposure to blood or bodily fluids.
- **Exposure Situations:** If an employee encounters blood or bodily fluids (e.g., from an injured coworker or wildlife), they must avoid direct contact and immediately report the incident to their supervisor.
- **First Aid:** Only trained personnel should administer first aid involving potential exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Use disposable gloves and other appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

- **Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.132 - 1910.138)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is crucial in minimizing exposure to bloodborne pathogens. [[PPE matrix chart](#)]

- **Gloves:** Employees must wear disposable gloves when there is potential for hand contact with blood or other bodily fluids.
- **Eye and Face Protection:** Masks, goggles, or face shields must be used if there is a risk of splashes or sprays of blood or other bodily fluids.
- **Protective Clothing:** Gowns, aprons, or other protective clothing must be worn when there is a risk of contamination of clothing with blood or other bodily fluids.
- **Maintenance of PPE:** PPE must be inspected before use and replaced if damaged. Employees are responsible for properly disposing of single-use PPE and cleaning reusable PPE according to manufacturer guidelines.

- **Procedures for Handling Contaminated Materials**

Proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials are essential to prevent exposure to bloodborne pathogens. The following procedures must be followed:

- **Identification:** Clearly mark and isolate areas or materials contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids.
- **Disposal of Sharps:** Use puncture-resistant containers for the disposal of needles and other sharp objects. These containers must be clearly labeled and disposed of according to local regulations.
- **Cleaning and Disinfection:** Clean and disinfect any surfaces or equipment contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids using an appropriate disinfectant. Employees must wear gloves and other necessary PPE during the cleaning process.
- **Waste Disposal:** Place contaminated materials (e.g., gloves, gauze, cleaning materials) in biohazard bags or containers. Dispose of these items according to local, state, and federal regulations.

### 12. Ergonomics Program

- **Overview**

The Ergonomics Program is designed to prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) by improving the fit between employees and their work environments. This program aims to enhance productivity and employee well-being by minimizing ergonomic risks through proper workstation setup, tool use, and work practices.

- **Principles of Ergonomics**

Understanding the principles of ergonomics helps in identifying and mitigating risks associated with repetitive tasks, awkward postures, and manual handling.

- **Neutral Posture:**
  - Maintain a neutral body position where the joints are naturally aligned.
  - Avoid excessive reaching, bending, and twisting.
- **Force:**
  - Minimize the amount of force required to perform tasks.
  - Use mechanical aids or get assistance when lifting heavy objects.
- **Repetition:**
  - Avoid repetitive motions that can lead to fatigue and injury.
  - Incorporate task variation and regular breaks.
- **Environment:**

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- Ensure adequate lighting to prevent eye strain.
- Maintain comfortable temperature and humidity levels.

### • Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries

Implementing ergonomic practices can significantly reduce the risk of MSDs. Follow these guidelines to prevent injuries:

- **Proper Lifting Techniques:**
  - Assess the weight and size of the object before lifting.
  - Use your legs, not your back, to lift objects.
  - Keep the object close to your body while lifting.
- **Workstation Setup:**
  - Arrange tools and equipment within easy reach.
  - Use adjustable chairs and work surfaces to maintain neutral postures.
  - Position monitors at eye level to avoid neck strain.
- **Tool Use:**
  - Select tools that are designed to minimize strain and fit the hand comfortably.
  - Use power tools to reduce the amount of manual force required.
  - Maintain tools in good working condition to prevent excessive vibration.
- **Task Variation:**
  - Rotate tasks to prevent repetitive motion injuries.
  - Take regular breaks to rest and stretch muscles.

### • Ergonomic Evaluations and Modifications

Regular evaluations of workstations and tasks can help identify and correct ergonomic issues.

- **Workstation Assessments:**
  - Conduct periodic assessments of workstations to ensure they are ergonomically sound.
  - Adjust workstations based on individual needs and job tasks.
- **Ergonomic Improvements:**
  - Implement changes to workstations, tools, and work practices based on assessment findings.
  - Provide adjustable equipment, such as chairs, desks, and monitor stands.
- **Employee Involvement:**
  - Encourage employees to report ergonomic concerns and suggest improvements.
  - Involve employees in the design and implementation of ergonomic solutions.

## 13. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.132 - 1910.138) [PPE matrix chart]

### • Overview

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is essential for protecting employees from workplace hazards that cannot be eliminated through engineering or administrative controls. This section outlines the requirements for selecting, using, and maintaining PPE to ensure the safety and health of all employees.

### • Selection and Use of PPE

Selecting the appropriate PPE for each task is crucial to ensure adequate protection. Follow these guidelines for selecting and using PPE:

- **Hazard Assessment:**
  - Conduct a hazard assessment to identify potential risks and determine the necessary PPE.
  - Document the findings of the hazard assessment and update it regularly.
- **Types of PPE:**
  - **Eye and Face Protection:** Safety glasses, goggles, face shields to protect against flying particles, chemical splashes, and harmful radiation.
  - **Head Protection:** Hard hats to protect against falling objects and electrical hazards.
  - **Hearing Protection:** Earplugs or earmuffs to protect against high noise levels.
  - **Respiratory Protection:** Masks and respirators to protect against inhalation of hazardous substances.

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- **Hand Protection:** Gloves suitable for specific tasks, such as handling chemicals, sharp objects, or hot materials.
- **Foot Protection:** Safety boots or shoes with slip-resistant soles and protective toe caps.
- **Body Protection:** Coveralls, aprons, or other protective clothing to guard against chemical splashes, heat, and sharp objects.
- **Proper Use:**
  - Ensure PPE fits properly and is comfortable to wear.
  - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for donning, doffing, and adjusting PPE.
  - Use PPE consistently and correctly for the duration of the task.
- **Training**

Proper training on the use of PPE is essential for ensuring its effectiveness. Training should cover the following aspects:

  - **PPE Requirements:**
    - Explain the importance of PPE and when it is required.
    - Provide an overview of the types of PPE available and their specific uses.
  - **Correct Use:**
    - Demonstrate how to properly wear, adjust, and remove PPE.
    - Emphasize the importance of inspecting PPE before use.
  - **Care and Maintenance:**
    - Instruct employees on how to clean and store PPE properly.
    - Explain the procedures for reporting damaged or defective PPE and obtaining replacements.
  - **Limitations of PPE:**
    - Discuss the limitations of PPE and the importance of using other control measures in conjunction with PPE.
- **Maintenance and Inspection**

Regular maintenance and inspection of PPE are necessary to ensure its effectiveness and longevity.

  - **Inspection:**
    - Inspect PPE before each use for signs of damage, wear, or contamination.
    - Replace damaged or worn PPE immediately.
  - **Cleaning:**
    - Clean PPE according to the manufacturer's instructions.
    - Use appropriate cleaning solutions and methods to avoid damaging the PPE.
  - **Storage:**
    - Store PPE in a clean, dry, and accessible location.
    - Protect PPE from exposure to sunlight, chemicals, and other damaging elements.
  - **Recordkeeping:**
    - Maintain records of PPE issued to employees, including the date of issue and type of equipment.
    - Keep records of training sessions and inspections.
- **Specific PPE Procedures**

Detailed procedures for using specific types of PPE are necessary to address the unique hazards of different tasks.

  - **Eye and Face Protection:**
    - Wear safety glasses or goggles when working with tools that produce flying particles or when handling chemicals.
    - Use face shields in addition to goggles when there is a risk of chemical splashes or high-velocity debris.
  - **Head Protection:**
    - Wear hard hats when working in areas where there is a risk of falling objects or electrical hazards.
    - Inspect hard hats regularly for cracks, dents, or other damage.
  - **Hearing Protection:**
    - Use earplugs or earmuffs in environments with noise levels above 85 decibels.

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- Ensure hearing protection fits properly and provides adequate noise reduction.
- **Respiratory Protection:**
  - Use respirators when working with hazardous substances or in environments with poor ventilation.
  - Perform fit tests to ensure a proper seal and check respirators for damage before use.
- **Hand Protection:**
  - Select gloves based on the specific hazards of the task, such as chemical resistance, cut resistance, or thermal protection.
  - Inspect gloves for tears, punctures, or degradation before use.
- **Foot Protection:**
  - Wear safety boots or shoes with protective toe caps and slip-resistant soles in areas with potential foot hazards.
  - Check footwear for signs of wear and replace as needed.
- **Body Protection:**
  - Use coveralls, aprons, or other protective clothing when handling chemicals, hot materials, or sharp objects.
  - Ensure clothing fits properly and does not restrict movement.
- **Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an emergency, proper use of PPE can mitigate the severity of injuries.

  - **Emergency Response:**
    - Ensure that PPE is readily available in emergency response kits.
    - Train employees on the use of PPE during emergencies, such as chemical spills or fires.
  - **First Aid:**
    - Provide appropriate PPE for first aid responders to protect against exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other hazards.
- **Program Evaluation**

Regular evaluation of the PPE program is essential for ensuring its effectiveness and compliance with OSHA standards.

  - **Program Review:**
    - Conduct an annual review of the PPE program to assess its effectiveness.
    - Update the program based on new information, technologies, or changes in job tasks.
  - **Employee Feedback:**
    - Solicit feedback from employees on the effectiveness of the PPE program and any areas for improvement.
    - Use feedback to make necessary adjustments to procedures and training.
- **Compliance**

Ensure that the PPE program complies with OSHA standards and regulations.

  - **OSHA Standards:**
    - Comply with OSHA standards for PPE (29 CFR 1910.132 - 1910.138).
    - Ensure that PPE meets the requirements of relevant ANSI standards.
  - **Documentation:**
    - Maintain documentation of hazard assessments, training sessions, inspections, and PPE issuance.
    - Keep records readily available for OSHA inspections and audits.

## 14. Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety

### • Fire Prevention

Fire prevention is critical for ensuring the safety of all employees. This section outlines the necessary precautions and procedures to prevent fires in the workplace.

- **Smoking Policies:**
  - Smoking is only allowed in designated exterior smoking areas.
  - Dispose of cigarette butts in appropriate receptacles.
- **Fire Hazards:**
  - Keep flammable materials away from heat sources and open flames.

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- Store flammable liquids in approved containers and cabinets.
- Ensure that electrical equipment is properly maintained to prevent overheating and sparks.
- **Fire Extinguishers:**
  - Fire extinguishers must be readily accessible and properly maintained.
  - Employees should know the location of fire extinguishers and how to use them.
  - Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of fire extinguishers.
- **Hot Work:**
  - Obtain a hot work permit before performing tasks that generate heat, sparks, or flames.
  - Use appropriate protective equipment and have fire extinguishing equipment readily available.
- **Housekeeping:**
  - Maintain clean work areas to reduce the accumulation of combustible materials.
  - Dispose of waste materials in metal containers with tight-fitting lids.
- **Emergency Exits:**
  - Ensure that emergency exits are clearly marked and free of obstruction.
  - Conduct regular fire drills to familiarize employees with evacuation routes and procedures.
- **Fire Safety Procedures**
  - **Alarm Activation:**
    - In case of fire, activate the nearest fire alarm pull station.
    - Alert others in the immediate area and call 911.
  - **Evacuation:**
    - Evacuate the building immediately using the nearest safe exit.
    - Do not use elevators during an evacuation.
    - Assemble at the designated meeting point and do not re-enter the building until authorized by emergency personnel.
  - **Using Fire Extinguishers:**
    - Only attempt to extinguish small, manageable fires.
    - Use the PASS method: Pull the pin, aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handle, and Sweep side to side.
    - If the fire is not quickly extinguished, evacuate immediately.
- **Electrical Safety**

Electrical hazards can cause serious injuries and fires. Follow these guidelines to ensure electrical safety in the workplace.

  - **Inspection and Maintenance:**
    - Regularly inspect electrical equipment and cords for damage.
    - Repair or replace damaged equipment and cords immediately.
  - **Use of Electrical Equipment:**
    - Use equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
    - Do not overload electrical outlets or circuits.
    - Avoid using extension cords as a permanent wiring solution.
  - **Grounding:**
    - Ensure that all electrical equipment is properly grounded.
    - Use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) in wet or damp locations.
  - **Lockout/Tagout Procedures:** (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.147) [[Lockout/Tagout tag sample](#)]
    - De-energize and lock out electrical sources before working on equipment.
    - Follow lockout/tagout procedures when performing maintenance on electrical equipment.
  - **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.132 - 1910.138) [Insert visual: PPE matrix chart]
    - Wear appropriate PPE, such as insulated gloves and boots, when working with electrical equipment.
    - Use non-conductive tools and equipment.

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- **Training:**
  - Provide training on electrical safety practices and procedures.
  - Ensure employees understand the risks and safety measures associated with electrical work.

### 15. Material Handling and Storage

- **Overview**

Proper material handling and storage are essential to prevent injuries and ensure a safe working environment. This section outlines the guidelines and procedures for safely handling and storing materials in the workplace.

- **Proper Lifting Techniques**

Using proper lifting techniques can prevent back injuries and other musculoskeletal disorders.

- **Plan the Lift:**
  - Assess the weight and size of the object before lifting.
  - Ensure the path is clear of obstacles.
- **Position Your Body:**
  - Stand close to the object with your feet shoulder-width apart.
  - Bend at the knees, not at the waist.
  - Keep your back straight.
- **Lift and Carry:**
  - Get a firm grip on the object and lift with your legs, not your back.
  - Hold the object close to your body.
  - Avoid twisting your body while carrying the object; turn your entire body instead.
- **Set Down the Load:**
  - Bend your knees and lower the object to the ground in a controlled manner.
  - Ensure your fingers and toes are clear of the load.

- **Use of Lifting Aids**

Mechanical aids can reduce the risk of injury when lifting heavy or awkward objects.

- **Dollies and Hand Trucks:**
  - Use dollies and hand trucks to transport heavy or bulky items.
  - Secure the load to prevent shifting during transport.
- **Pallet Jacks and Forklifts:**
  - Use pallet jacks and forklifts for lifting and moving heavy pallets.
  - Only trained and authorized personnel may operate forklifts.
- **Cranes and Hoists:**
  - Use cranes and hoists for lifting very heavy or large objects.
  - Ensure the equipment is properly maintained and inspected before use.

- **Safe Storage Practices**

Proper storage of materials can prevent accidents and injuries.

- **General Storage Guidelines:**
  - Store materials in a stable and organized manner.
  - Ensure that aisles, exits, and access to emergency equipment are not obstructed.
- **Stacking and Piling:**
  - Stack materials evenly and straight to prevent tipping.
  - Do not stack materials too high; ensure they are stable and secure.
- **Heavy Materials:**
  - Store heavy materials on lower shelves to reduce the risk of falling.



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- Use mechanical aids or get assistance when lifting heavy items onto shelves.
- **Hazardous Materials:**
  - Store hazardous materials in designated areas away from incompatible substances.
  - Ensure containers are properly labeled and sealed.

### 16. Tool and Equipment Operation

#### • Overview

Safe operation of tools and equipment is essential to prevent accidents and injuries in the workplace. This section outlines the guidelines and procedures for safely operating tools and equipment, ensuring that employees are adequately trained and equipped to handle them.

#### • General Safety Guidelines

##### • Pre-Operation Inspection:

- Inspect tools and equipment before each use to ensure they are in good working condition.
- Check for signs of damage, wear, or defects.
- Ensure that safety guards and devices are in place and functioning properly.

##### • Proper Use:

- Use tools and equipment only for their intended purposes.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and safety guidelines.
- Do not bypass safety devices or modify tools and equipment.

##### ○ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.132 - 1910.138) [\[PPE matrix chart\]](#)

- Wear appropriate PPE, such as safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection, and respiratory protection, based on the task and equipment used.
- Ensure PPE fits properly and is in good condition.

##### • Work Area Safety:

- Keep the work area clean and free of obstructions.
- Ensure adequate lighting in all work areas.
- Use barriers or warning signs to alert others of potential hazards.

#### • Portable Power Tools

##### • Inspection and Maintenance:

- Inspect power tools before each use for damage or wear.
- Ensure cords are free of cuts, frays, and other damage.
- Regularly maintain power tools according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

##### • Safe Operation:

- Secure the workpiece to prevent movement.
- Keep hands and body parts away from moving parts.
- Do not use power tools in wet or damp conditions to avoid electrical shock.
- Disconnect tools from the power source when not in use or when changing accessories.

##### • Electrical Safety:

- Use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) when operating power tools in wet or damp environments.
- Ensure tools are properly grounded or double-insulated.
- Avoid using extension cords as a permanent wiring solution.

#### • Hand Tools

##### • Selection and Use:

- Use the right tool for the job to prevent misuse.
- Ensure tools are in good condition and appropriate for the task.

##### • Safe Handling:

- Keep tools clean and in good working order.
- Use tools according to their design and purpose.
- Store tools in designated areas when not in use.

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- **Maintenance:**
  - Regularly inspect hand tools for damage or wear.
  - Repair or replace damaged tools immediately.
- **Heavy Equipment**
  - **Operator Training:**
    - Only trained and authorized personnel may operate heavy equipment.
    - Complete operator safety training and maintain certification as required.
  - **Pre-Operation Inspection:**
    - Check all fluid levels, hoses, and tires.
    - Ensure that all safety devices, such as seat belts and roll-over protection systems, are functional.
  - **Safe Operation:**
    - Wear appropriate PPE, including hard hats and steel-toed boots.
    - Maintain awareness of your surroundings and use spotters when necessary.
    - Do not exceed the equipment's load capacity.
    - Follow proper procedures for mounting and dismounting equipment.
  - **Shutdown Procedures:**
    - Park equipment on level ground.
    - Lower all attachments to the ground and engage parking brakes.
    - Turn off the engine and remove the key.
- **Ladders and Scaffolding**
  - **Inspection and Setup:**
    - Inspect ladders and scaffolding before use for damage or defects.
    - Ensure ladders are set up on stable, level ground.
    - Secure scaffolding to prevent movement.
  - **Safe Use:**
    - Maintain three points of contact (two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand) while climbing ladders.
    - Do not overreach or lean too far to the side when on ladders or scaffolding.
    - Use fall protection equipment when working at heights above six feet.
  - **Storage and Maintenance:**
    - Store ladders and scaffolding in designated areas when not in use.
    - Perform regular maintenance and repair as needed.
- **Cutting Tools**
  - **Pre-Operation Inspection:**
    - Inspect cutting tools, such as saws and shears, for damage or wear before use.
    - Ensure blades are sharp and securely attached.
  - **Safe Operation:**
    - Secure the workpiece to prevent movement during cutting.
    - Keep hands and body parts away from the cutting area.
    - Use appropriate PPE, such as safety glasses and cut-resistant gloves.
  - **Maintenance:**
    - Sharpen blades regularly to maintain efficiency and safety.
    - Replace damaged or worn blades immediately.
- **Compressed Air Tools**
  - **Inspection and Maintenance:**
    - Inspect hoses and connections for damage or wear before use.
    - Ensure air pressure settings are within the manufacturer's recommended range.

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- **Safe Operation:**
  - Secure hoses to prevent whipping if they become disconnected.
  - Do not point air nozzles at yourself or others.
  - Use appropriate PPE, such as safety glasses and hearing protection.
- **Storage:**
  - Disconnect tools from the air supply when not in use.
  - Store tools and hoses in designated areas.
- **Welding and Cutting Equipment**
  - **Inspection and Maintenance:**
    - Inspect welding and cutting equipment before using for damage or wear.
    - Ensure gas connections are secure and free of leaks.
  - **Safe Operation:**
    - Use appropriate PPE, including welding helmets, gloves, and flame-resistant clothing.
    - Ensure proper ventilation in the work area to avoid inhaling fumes.
    - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.
  - **Storage:**
    - Store gas cylinders upright and secure them with chains or straps.
    - Keep flammable materials away from welding and cutting areas.

## 17. Chemical Safety

### • Overview

Chemical safety is essential to prevent injuries, illnesses, and environmental harm. This section outlines the guidelines and procedures for handling, storing, and disposing of chemicals safely in the workplace.

### ○ Hazard Communication (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1200) [[GHS Pictograms poster](#)]

Proper communication of chemical hazards is crucial for ensuring employee safety.

- **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS):**
  - Ensure that MSDS are available and accessible for all chemicals used in the workplace.
  - MSDS provide information on the hazards of each chemical, including safe handling and emergency procedures.
- **Labeling:**
  - All chemical containers must be labeled with the identity of the chemical and appropriate hazard warnings.
  - Labels must include the manufacturer's name and address.
  - Ensure that secondary containers are also labeled appropriately.
- **Training:**
  - Provide training on the Hazard Communication standard and the safe handling of chemicals. (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1200)
  - Training should include understanding MSDS, proper labeling, and emergency procedures for chemical spills.
- **Safe Handling and Storage of Chemicals**

Proper handling and storage of chemicals are essential to prevent accidents and exposure.

- **Handling Procedures:**
  - Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, goggles, and aprons.
  - Handle chemicals in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes.
  - Use proper tools and equipment to transfer chemicals and avoid direct contact.
- **Storage Guidelines:**
  - Store chemicals in their original containers with intact labels.
  - Keep chemicals in designated storage areas away from incompatible substances.
  - Ensure that storage areas are cool, dry, and well-ventilated.
  - Store flammable chemicals in approved flammable storage cabinets.

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- **Segregation of Chemicals:**

- Separate chemicals by hazard class (e.g., flammables, corrosives, oxidizers) to prevent reactions.
- Use secondary containment to prevent spills from spreading.

- **Emergency Procedures for Chemical Spills**

Knowing how to respond to chemical spills is crucial for minimizing harm.

- **Spill Response Plan:**

- Develop and implement a spill response plan.
- Train employees on spill response procedures and the use of spill kits.

- **Immediate Actions:**

- Evacuate the area if necessary and alert others to the spill.
- Use appropriate PPE to contain and clean up the spill if it is safe to do so.
- Follow the MSDS instructions for specific spill response actions.

- **Reporting and Documentation:**

- Report all spills to a supervisor immediately.
- Document the spill, including the type of chemical, amount, and response actions taken.

- **Disposal of Chemicals**

Proper disposal of chemicals is essential to prevent environmental contamination and comply with regulations.

- **Hazardous Waste Identification:**

- Identify and label hazardous waste according to local, state, and federal regulations.
- Keep an inventory of hazardous waste generated.

- **Disposal Procedures:**

- Follow the MSDS and regulatory guidelines for disposing of chemicals.
- Use licensed hazardous waste disposal companies for removal and disposal.
- Do not pour chemicals down the drain or dispose of them in regular trash.

- **Recordkeeping:**

- Maintain records of hazardous waste disposal, including manifests and receipts.
- Ensure records are kept for a minimum of three years.

## 18. Acknowledgment Form

- **Employee Acknowledgment of Safety Policies and Procedures**