TOPIC LIST · 100 TOPICS · FREE PDF

100 Safety Topics for Daily Toolbox Talks

Here are 100 safety topics for daily toolbox talks, grouped by hazard. Each one gives you a single sourced point from an OSHA standard or publication to build the talk around, with a link to the source and a note on whether it is a construction (1926) or general industry (1910) rule. The whole list is a free PDF: download the 100 topics.

Sourced from OSHA regulations and guidance
Updated November 2026
Every quote checked word for word

PART 1

How to use the list

Pick the topic that matches what the crew is about to do, not the one that is next on the list. OSHA suggests toolbox talks as a way to cover the hazards of each specific site on top of general training such as the 10-hour course. **[OSHA]** Then build the talk in three parts:

1. **The point.** Read the sourced line, then say what it looks like on this job today.
2. **Your example.** Something the crew has seen here: a close call, a near miss, a fix that worked. OSHA asks employers to make it easy to report close calls, and a talk is a good place to hear them. **[OSHA]**
3. **A question back.** Adults learn more when they take part, and they bring experience worth hearing. **[OSHA]** Ask where the hazard is on this site and who is exposed.

Watch the part number. Construction work follows 29 CFR 1926 and general industry follows 29 CFR 1910, and some numbers differ between them. The fall protection trigger is 6 feet in construction and 4 feet in general industry. **[OSHA]** Each line below says which applies.

Want the talk already written? There are thirteen 5-minute talks to read aloud, a short topic for each day picked by date, and full talks with a sign-in sheet on fall protection, ladders, PPE, slips, trips and falls, electrical safety and cold weather. To plan the task itself, a free JHA template sets out the steps, hazards and controls in Word or PDF. Record who attended on the free meeting sign-in sheet.

Planning by the calendar instead? Each month has four or five dated weekly talks for what that month brings: November (dark commutes, heaters, first ice), December (storms, roof snow, the holiday rush) and January (back after the break, temporary heat). To pick a topic from the job in front of you, use the toolbox talk topic picker.

PART 2

Falls from height

1. **The 6-foot rule.** In construction, an open edge 6 feet or more above the next level means a guardrail, a safety net or a personal fall arrest system for everyone working on it. (1926) **[OSHA]**
2. **Fall protection in general industry.** OSHA sets the fall protection trigger at 4 feet in general industry, 6 feet in construction, and at any height over dangerous equipment. **[OSHA]**
3. **Holes and skylights.** Holes more than 6 feet above a lower level, skylights included, need covers, guardrails or personal fall arrest. (1926) **[OSHA]**
4. **Hole covers.** A cover must hold at least twice the weight that could be put on it, and be color coded or marked "HOLE" or "COVER". (1926) **[OSHA]**
5. **Guardrail height.** Top rails sit 42 inches above the walking surface, plus or minus 3 inches. (1926) **[OSHA]**
6. **Inspecting your harness.** Personal fall arrest systems are inspected before each use for wear, damage and deterioration; defective parts come out of service. (1926) **[OSHA]**
7. **Anchor points.** An anchorage holds at least 5,000 pounds per attached worker, or is designed and used under a qualified person as part of a complete system, and is separate from any platform suspension. (1926) **[OSHA]**

8. **Free fall distance.** A personal fall arrest system is rigged so a worker can neither free fall more than 6 feet nor hit a lower level. (1926) **[OSHA]**
9. **Rescue after a fall.** The employer must provide for prompt rescue of a fallen worker, or make sure workers can rescue themselves. (1926) **[OSHA]**
10. **Residential roofing falls.** Residential construction 6 feet or more above a lower level needs guardrails, nets or personal fall arrest unless a written fall protection plan shows those are infeasible or more dangerous. (1926) **[OSHA]**

PART 3

Ladders, stairs, scaffolds and lifts

11. **Ladder angle.** Set a straight or extension ladder so the base is about one quarter of the working length away from the wall. (1926) **[OSHA]**
12. **Three feet above the landing.** A ladder used to reach a landing extends at least 3 feet above it, or is tied off at the top with a grab rail provided. (1926) **[OSHA]**
13. **Three points of contact.** Keep two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand, on the ladder; face it and keep your body near the middle. **[OSHA]**
14. **Top of the stepladder.** The top and the top step of a stepladder are not steps. (1926) **[OSHA]**
15. **Damaged ladders.** A ladder with broken rungs, split rails or corroded parts is tagged "Do Not Use" at once and withdrawn until repaired. (1926) **[OSHA]**
16. **Ladders near power lines.** Look for overhead power lines before you handle a ladder, and avoid metal ladders near power lines or exposed live equipment. **[OSHA]**
17. **Scaffold fall protection.** Anyone on a scaffold more than 10 feet above a lower level needs fall protection. (1926) **[OSHA]**
18. **Scaffold inspection.** A competent person checks every scaffold for visible defects before the shift starts, and again after any event that could have weakened it. (1926) **[OSHA]**
19. **Getting onto a scaffold.** When a platform is more than 2 feet above or below the access point, use a ladder, stair tower, ramp or similar; crossbraces are never a ladder. (1926) **[OSHA]**
20. **Aerial lift basics.** Stand firmly on the floor of the basket, never on the rails, planks or a ladder, and wear a body belt with a lanyard tied to the boom or basket. (1926) **[OSHA]**

21. **Aerial lifts near power lines.** Treat every overhead power and communication line as energized and stay at least 10 feet away. **[OSHA]**

PART 4

Electrical

22. **GFCI protection.** All 120-volt, 15- and 20-amp receptacles on a construction site that are not part of the permanent wiring need ground-fault circuit interrupters. (1926) **[OSHA]**

23. **Extension cord condition.** Worn or frayed cords are not used, and cords are never fastened with staples, hung from nails or hung by wire. (1926) **[OSHA]**

24. **The right extension cord.** Cords for portable tools are three-wire and rated for hard or extra-hard usage. (1926) **[OSHA]**

25. **Cords through doorways.** Cords must be protected from damage; they may pass through doorways and pinch points only if protected. (1926) **[OSHA]**

26. **Working near live circuits.** Nobody works close enough to contact a live circuit unless it is deenergized and grounded, or guarded by insulation or other means. (1926) **[OSHA]**

27. **Finding hidden circuits.** Before work starts, the employer checks by inquiry, observation or instruments for live circuits the work could touch, posts warning signs, and tells the crew where they are. (1926) **[OSHA]**

28. **Tagging deenergized circuits.** Deenergized equipment and circuits are made inoperative and tagged at every point where they could be re-energized. (1926) **[OSHA]**

29. **The five most common electrical causes.** OSHA lists contact with power lines, missing ground-fault protection, a missing path to ground, misused equipment, and misused cords as the most frequent causes of electrical injury. **[OSHA]**

30. **Equipment near overhead lines.** Construction equipment working near lines rated 50 kV or less keeps at least 10 feet between the line and any part of the machine or load. (1926) **[OSHA]**

PART 5

Vehicles, equipment and struck-by

31. **Backing up.** A vehicle with an obstructed rear view is not used unless it has a reverse alarm audible above the site noise, or an observer signals that backing is safe. (1926) **[OSHA]**

32. **Seat belts in site vehicles.** Seat belts meeting the federal motor vehicle standards must be installed in all motor vehicles on site. (1926) **[OSHA]**

33. **Pre-shift vehicle check.** Vehicles are checked at the start of each shift: brakes, tires, horn, steering, coupling devices, seat belts, controls and safety devices, with defects fixed before use. (1926) **[OSHA]**

34. **Earthmoving equipment horns.** Bidirectional machines such as loaders and dozers need a horn that stands out from site noise, used when the machine moves either way. (1926) **[OSHA]**

35. **Working under raised equipment.** Suspended machinery is blocked or cribbed before anyone works under or between it, and blades and buckets are lowered or blocked when not in use. (1926) **[OSHA]**

36. **Flaggers.** Flagger signals and the warning garments flaggers wear must follow Part 6 of the MUTCD. (1926) **[OSHA]**

37. **Highway work zones.** Falls, electrical, struck-by and caught-between are the common hazards in highway work, and the MUTCD governs signs, barricades and flagging. **[OSHA]**

38. **Winter driving.** Employers cannot control the roads, but they can make sure drivers recognize the hazards of snow and ice, are trained for winter driving, and are licensed for the vehicles they drive. **[OSHA]**

39. **Stranded in a vehicle.** Stay in the vehicle, call for help, and do not leave to look for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards. **[OSHA]**

40. **Forklift pedestrians.** Slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and anywhere vision is blocked; travel with the load trailing if it blocks the view ahead. (1910) **[OSHA]**

PART 6

Excavation, confined spaces and cranes

41. **Trench protective systems.** Everyone in an excavation is protected from cave-ins by an adequate protective system, with narrow exceptions for stable rock and shallow trenches a competent person has checked. (1926) **[OSHA]**

42. **Slope it, shore it, shield it.** Trenches 5 feet deep or more need a protective system unless they are dug entirely in stable rock. **[OSHA]**

43. **Getting out of a trench.** Trenches 4 feet deep or more need a ladder, stairway or ramp within 25 feet of lateral travel for every worker. (1926) **[OSHA]**

44. **Spoil piles.** Excavated material and equipment stay at least 2 feet from the edge, or retaining devices keep them from falling in. (1926) **[OSHA]**

45. **Daily trench inspection.** A competent person inspects the excavation before work starts, as needed through the shift, and after every rainstorm. (1926) **[OSHA]**

46. **Call before you dig.** The estimated location of sewer, telephone, fuel, electric and water lines is determined before an excavation is opened. (1926) **[OSHA]**

47. **What makes a confined space a permit space.** A permit space may hold a hazardous atmosphere, material that can engulf a person, converging walls or sloping floors that can trap, or another serious hazard. **[OSHA]**

48. **Identifying confined spaces.** Before work begins, a competent person identifies every confined space workers may enter and which of them are permit spaces. (1926) **[OSHA]**

49. **Cranes and power lines.** If any part of the crane, load line or load could come within 20 feet of a power line, the employer must deenergize it, keep 20 feet clear, or use the Table A clearance. (1926) **[OSHA]**

50. **Rigging inspection.** Rigging is inspected before use on each shift and as needed during use; defective rigging comes out of service. (1926) **[OSHA]**

PART 7

Tools, machines and hazardous energy

51. **Five rules for tools.** Keep tools maintained, use the right tool for the job, examine each tool before use, follow the manufacturer's instructions, and use the right PPE. **[OSHA]**

52. **Guards on power tools.** Power tools designed to take guards are used with those guards in place. (1926) **[OSHA]**

53. **Tool condition.** All hand and power tools, whether the company's or the worker's own, are kept in safe condition. (1926) **[OSHA]**

54. **Pneumatic tools.** Air tools are secured to the hose so they cannot disconnect, and impact tools have safety clips so attachments cannot fly off. (1926) **[OSHA]**

55. **Compressed air for cleaning.** Compressed air is not used for cleaning unless reduced below 30 psi, and then only with chip guarding and PPE. (1926) **[OSHA]**

56. **Machine guarding.** Guarding protects operators and others from the point of operation, nip points, rotating parts, and flying chips and sparks. (1910) **[OSHA]**

57. **Lockout before servicing.** Unexpected start-up or release of stored energy during servicing can kill; lockout/tagout procedures are how that energy is controlled. **[OSHA]**

58. **The lockout sequence.** Prepare, shut down, isolate, apply locks or tags, release stored energy, then verify isolation before touching the machine. (1910) **[OSHA]**

59. **Who removes a lock.** Each lock or tag is removed by the person who put it on, with a documented exception procedure when that person is not available. (1910) **[OSHA]**

60. **Who operates equipment.** Only workers qualified by training or experience may operate equipment and machinery. (1926) **[OSHA]**

PART 8

Personal protective equipment

61. **Who pays for PPE.** PPE required by the construction standards is provided by the employer at no cost to workers, with listed exceptions. (1926) **[OSHA]**

62. **Hard hats.** Protective helmets are worn where there is danger of head injury from impact, falling or flying objects, or electrical shock and burns. (1926) **[OSHA]**

63. **Eye protection.** Appropriate eye or face protection is used against flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, acids, gases, vapors and harmful light. (1926) **[OSHA]**

64. **Side shields.** Where flying objects are a hazard, eye protection must have side protection; clip-on or slide-on side shields that meet the rule are acceptable. (1926) **[OSHA]**

65. **Hand protection.** Gloves are selected for the hazard: skin absorption, cuts, abrasions, punctures, chemical and thermal burns, and temperature extremes. (1910) **[OSHA]**

66. **PPE hazard assessment.** The employer assesses the workplace to decide whether hazards require PPE, and then selects and fits it. (1910) **[OSHA]**

67. **PPE training.** Workers who must use PPE are trained on when it is needed, what kind, how to put it on and remove it, its limits, and its care. **[OSHA]**

68. **Respirator fit.** Tight-fitting respirators are fit tested before first use and at least yearly, and a user seal check is done every time one goes on. (1910) **[OSHA]**

69. **Facial hair and respirators.** A tight-fitting respirator cannot be worn over facial hair that sits between the seal and the face or interferes with the valves. (1910) **[OSHA]**

PART 9

Chemicals, dust, noise and health

70. **Reading a safety data sheet.** Every SDS has 16 numbered sections in a fixed order; section 2 is the hazards, section 4 first aid, section 8 exposure controls and PPE. **[OSHA]**

71. **Where the SDSs are.** Copies of every SDS are kept in the workplace and readily accessible to workers during each shift in their work area. (1910) **[OSHA]**

72. **New chemical, new training.** Hazard communication training happens at initial assignment and whenever a new chemical hazard is introduced into the work area. (1910) **[OSHA]**

73. **Silica: Table 1.** For each task on Table 1, the employer fully implements the listed engineering controls, work practices and respiratory protection, or measures exposure instead. (1926) **[OSHA]**

74. **No dry sweeping silica dust.** Dry sweeping and dry brushing are not allowed where they could add to silica exposure, unless wet methods or HEPA vacuuming are not feasible. (1926) **[OSHA]**

75. **What silica does.** Respirable silica causes silicosis, lung cancer, COPD and kidney disease, usually after years of exposure. **[OSHA]**

76. **Noise in construction.** When noise exceeds the Table D-2 levels, feasible administrative or engineering controls come first, then hearing protection. (1926) **[OSHA]**

77. **How loud is too loud.** If you have to raise your voice to talk to someone 3 feet away, the noise may be over 85 decibels, the level that can damage hearing. **[OSHA]**

78. **Hearing conservation (general industry).** A hearing conservation program is required when exposures reach an 8-hour average of 85 decibels, with hearing protectors available at no cost. (1910) **[OSHA]**

79. **Carbon monoxide.** CO is colorless and odorless, and the internal combustion engine is one of the most common workplace sources. **[OSHA]**

80. **Bloodborne pathogens.** Universal precautions: treat all blood and body fluids as potentially infectious. (1910) **[OSHA]**

81. **Needlestick or blood exposure.** Flood the exposed area with water, clean any wound with soap and water, report it at once and get medical attention. **[OSHA]**

PART 10

Fire, weather and emergencies

82. **Fire extinguisher spacing.** On a construction site, a 2A-rated extinguisher is provided for each 3,000 square feet, with travel distance no more than 100 feet. (1926) **[OSHA]**

83. **Extinguisher checks.** In general industry, portable extinguishers are visually inspected monthly and get an annual maintenance check. (1910) **[OSHA]**

84. **Flammable liquids on site.** Flammable liquids are kept in approved containers, and no more than 25 gallons are stored in a room outside an approved cabinet. (1926) **[OSHA]**

85. **Smoking near fire hazards.** Smoking is prohibited at or near operations that are a fire hazard, with "No Smoking or Open Flame" posted. (1926) **[OSHA]**

86. **Hot work fire watch.** When normal precautions are not enough, extra people are assigned to watch for fire during welding or cutting and long enough afterward to be sure nothing is burning. (1926) **[OSHA]**

87. **Lightning.** If you hear thunder, get to a safe place; stay inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder. **[OSHA]**

88. **Exit routes.** Exit routes are kept free and unobstructed, lit, and marked with signs reading "Exit". (1910) **[OSHA]**

89. **Emergency action plan.** A written plan covers how to report an emergency, evacuation routes, who stays to run critical operations, how to account for everyone, and who to ask. (1910) **[OSHA]**

90. **Reporting a death or hospitalization.** A death at work is reported to OSHA inside 8 hours; someone admitted to hospital, an amputation or a lost eye inside 24 hours. **[OSHA]**

PART 11

Housekeeping, heat, cold and the basics

91. **Housekeeping on site.** Scrap lumber with protruding nails and other debris is kept cleared from work areas, passageways and stairs. (1926) **[OSHA]**
92. **Drinking water.** An adequate supply of potable water is provided, dispensed from closed containers with a tap, and the common drinking cup is prohibited. (1926) **[OSHA]**
93. **Heat: water, rest, shade.** Drink water often rather than waiting for thirst, take the breaks, and rest somewhere cool; add electrolyte drinks on jobs over two hours. **[OSHA]**
94. **Heat stroke signs.** Confusion, slurred speech or unconsciousness are signs of heat stroke: call 911 and cool the worker with ice or cold water until help arrives. **[OSHA]**
95. **Cold stress.** Hypothermia, frostbite, trench foot and chilblains are the cold injuries; wet clothing and wind multiply the risk. **[OSHA]**
96. **Fatigue and long hours.** OSHA links long work hours to more injuries and accidents, and to stress and poor health. **[OSHA]**
97. **Lifting and ergonomics.** Lifting heavy items, bending, reaching overhead, pushing and pulling, awkward postures and repetition are the risk factors for musculoskeletal disorders. **[OSHA]**
98. **Reporting injuries.** The employer must have a reasonable procedure for reporting injuries, tell every worker what it is, and never retaliate for a report. **[OSHA]**
99. **Near misses.** OSHA asks employers to give workers a simple way to report close calls and hazards, including anonymously, and to follow up promptly. **[OSHA]**
100. **First aid on site.** Where no clinic or hospital is reasonably close, a person with a valid first-aid certificate is on site, and supplies are easily accessible. (1926) **[OSHA]**

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