13 SHORT TALKS · 5 MINUTES OR LESS

5 Minute Safety Topics and 1 Minute Versions, Ready to Read

Thirteen 5-minute safety talks you can read aloud as written: ladders, fall protection, housekeeping, tools, cords, backing up, trenches, heat, hearing, PPE, fire, lockout/tagout and silica. Each quotes the OSHA rule it rests on, has a 1-minute version for short mornings, and ends with two questions for the crew.

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

PART 1

How to use these

Pick the talk that matches today's work. Read it as written, or read the one-minute version and spend the rest of the time on your own site. Then ask the two questions and wait. OSHA's guidance on training says adults learn more when they take part, bring experience worth drawing on, and resent being talked down to. **[OSHA]** Short, specific and two-way beats long and general.

Need a topic that is not here? The list of 100 topics gives one sourced point per hazard, the cold weather toolbox talk covers winter work in full, and the daily safety moment is a shorter option. For a new or changed task, lay out the steps, hazards and controls first on a free JHA template.

PART 2

1 minute and 2 minute safety topics

Every talk below opens with a one-minute version: the rule and the action in two or three sentences. Read one on its own as a 1 minute safety topic. For a 2 minute talk, read the one-minute version, then ask one of the two crew questions under the full talk and wait for an answer.

- Ladders: one-minute version
- Fall protection: one-minute version
- Slips, trips and housekeeping: one-minute version
- Hand and power tools: one-minute version
- Cords, GFCIs and the ground pin: one-minute version
- Backing up and spotters: one-minute version
- Trench safety: one-minute version
- Heat illness: one-minute version
- Hearing protection: one-minute version
- PPE: one-minute version
- Fire: one-minute version
- Lockout/tagout: one-minute version
- Silica dust: one-minute version

PART 3

1. Ladders: the five things that put people in the hospital

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Set the base a quarter of the working length from the wall, extend 3 feet above the landing or tie off, keep three points of contact, stay off the top step, and tag out any ladder with a broken rung or split rail.

Read this to the crew

Falls from portable ladders are one of the leading causes of deaths and injuries at work, and almost every one of them traces back to a handful of habits. **[OSHA]** Here are the five.
One, the angle. A straight or extension ladder is set so the distance from the wall to the feet is about one quarter of the working length. **[OSHA]** Too steep and it tips back, too flat and the feet kick out.
Two, the top. If you are climbing onto a roof or landing, the rails extend at least 3 feet above it. If the ladder is too short for that, it is tied off at the top to something rigid and a grab rail is fitted. **[OSHA]** Stepping off a ladder that ends at the edge is where people lose their balance.
Three, your hands. Face the ladder and keep three points of contact, two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand, with your body near the middle of the rungs. **[OSHA]** Do not carry anything that could make you lose your balance. **[OSHA]**
Four, the stepladder.

> “The top or top step of a stepladder shall not be used as a step.”

If you need to stand that high, you need a taller ladder or a different piece of equipment.
Five, the ladder itself. A ladder with a broken or missing rung, a split rail or corroded parts is marked or tagged "Do Not Use" immediately and withdrawn until it is repaired. **[OSHA]** Ladders are only used on stable, level ground unless secured, and never on boxes or barrels for extra height. **[OSHA]** And before you carry a ladder anywhere, look up for power lines. **[OSHA]**

Ask the crew

1. Which ladder on this site is the wrong length for the job it is doing?
2. Where do we tag and store a damaged ladder so nobody uses it tomorrow?

PART 4

2. Fall protection: six feet, every time

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Six feet or more above the next level with an unprotected edge means a guardrail, a net or a harness. Inspect your harness before each use, know your anchor, and know how you would be rescued.

Read this to the crew

Here is the rule for construction, word for word:

> “Unprotected sides and edges. Each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems.”

Three things in that sentence matter today. First, 6 feet is not far. It is a stepladder height, the top of a loading dock, the second lift of a scaffold. Second, "shall be protected" means a system, not care or experience. Third, you get a choice of three systems, and the job decides which.
Guardrails are the first choice because nobody has to do anything to be protected. The top rail sits 42 inches above the surface, give or take 3 inches. **[OSHA]** Holes count too: anything more than 6 feet above a lower level, skylights included, gets a cover, a guardrail or a harness. **[OSHA]** A cover holds at least twice the load that could land on it and is marked "HOLE" or "COVER". **[OSHA]**
A personal fall arrest system only works if three things are right. The harness and lanyard are inspected before each use, and anything worn or damaged is taken out of service. **[OSHA]** The anchor can hold 5,000 pounds for each person tied to it, or is designed and used under a qualified person as part of a complete system, and it is separate from whatever is holding up the platform. **[OSHA]** And the system is rigged so you cannot free fall more than 6 feet or hit anything below. **[OSHA]** A lanyard tied off at your feet on a 10-foot drop does not pass that test.
Last: a fall is not over when the harness catches you. The employer must provide for prompt rescue, or make sure you can get yourself down. **[OSHA]** If nobody on this crew can say how that would happen, that is today's problem to solve.

Ask the crew

1. Where on this job is someone working 6 feet up without a rail, and what is protecting them?
2. If I fell right now and was hanging, who gets me down and with what?

PART 5

3. Slips, trips and housekeeping

Any workplace

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Clear scrap and nails from walkways and stairs as you go, remove combustible debris regularly, keep cords out of walking areas, and fix or guard a bad walking surface before anyone uses it again.

Read this to the crew

Housekeeping sounds like tidiness. On a job it is a fall control, a fire control and a cut control at the same time. The construction rule says it plainly:

> “During the course of construction, alteration, or repairs, form and scrap lumber with protruding nails, and all other debris, shall be kept cleared from work areas, passageways, and stairs, in and around buildings or other structures.”

Notice "kept cleared". That is a continuous duty, not an end-of-day sweep. Combustible scrap comes out at regular intervals, with a safe way to remove it, and oily or flammable waste goes in covered containers. [OSHA]

Cords are a trip hazard with a voltage. Work spaces and walkways are kept clear of them, and no cord is stapled, hung from a nail or suspended by wire. [OSHA]

In general industry the walking-working surfaces rule covers the same ground: floors kept clean and, as far as feasible, dry, with drainage and dry standing places where wet processes are used; surfaces free of sharp objects, loose boards, spills, snow and ice. [OSHA] And a hazard on a walking surface is fixed before anyone uses that surface again, or guarded until it can be. [OSHA]

Stored material is part of housekeeping too. Tiers are stacked, racked, blocked or interlocked so they cannot slide or collapse, and storage areas are kept free of the build-up that causes trips and fires. [OSHA]

The practical version for today: every time you walk a route, you own it. If you step over something, move it. If you cannot move it, mark it and tell the supervisor.

Ask the crew

1. Which walkway on this site did you step over something on this morning?
2. Where do nails and scrap pile up fastest here, and how often is it cleared?

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4. Hand and power tools

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Check the tool before you pick it up, keep the guard on, use the right tool for the job, follow the manual, and wear the PPE the tool needs. A damaged tool goes out of service, whoever owns it.

Read this to the crew

OSHA's hand and power tool booklet gives five rules: keep tools in good condition with regular maintenance, use the right tool for the job, examine each tool for damage before use and do not use a damaged one, operate tools according to the manufacturer's instructions, and provide and use the right PPE. **[OSHA]** The greatest hazards from hand tools come from misuse and poor maintenance. **[OSHA]**
The construction standard backs that up and adds one point people forget: it covers your own tools too.

> “All hand and power tools and similar equipment, whether furnished by the employer or the employee, shall be maintained in a safe condition.”

Guards. If a power tool was designed to take a guard, the guard is on when the tool is in use. **[OSHA]** Belts, gears, shafts, pulleys and other moving parts that you could touch are guarded. **[OSHA]** A grinder with the guard rotated out of the way is the classic one.
Air tools. Pneumatic tools are secured to the hose or whip so they cannot disconnect, and impact tools have safety clips so the chisel or bit cannot fly out. **[OSHA]** Compressed air is not used for cleaning unless it is reduced below 30 psi, and then only with chip guarding and PPE. **[OSHA]** Blowing dust off your clothes with the line is not cleaning; it is a way to drive debris into skin and eyes.
Electric tools. They are either double-insulated or grounded. **[OSHA]** A ground pin snapped off a cord defeats that, which is why the cord check matters as much as the tool check.
Today: before the first cut, take ten seconds with the tool in your hands. Guard, cord or hose, trigger, blade or bit. If any one is wrong, it does not get used.

Ask the crew

1. Which tool on this crew has had its guard removed, and why?
2. What do we do with a damaged tool here so it does not come back out of the gang box?

PART 7

5. Cords, GFCIs and the ground pin

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Every temporary 120-volt outlet on site has GFCI protection. Cords are three-wire, rated hard or extra-hard use, protected from damage and never worn, frayed, stapled or hung on nails.

Read this to the crew

OSHA lists the most frequent causes of electrical injury: contact with power lines, missing ground-fault protection, a missing or broken path to ground, equipment not used as intended, and improper use of extension and flexible cords. **[OSHA]** Four of the five are about the cord in your hand and the outlet it is plugged into.

GFCIs. On a construction site, every 120-volt, 15- or 20-amp receptacle that is not part of the building's permanent wiring and is in use by workers has a ground-fault circuit interrupter. **[OSHA]** That includes the temporary panel, the spider box and the outlet on the generator cart, with a narrow exception for some small portable generators. Test the GFCI; a dead test button means no protection.

Cords. The rule is blunt:

> "Worn or frayed electric cords or cables shall not be used."

Cords for portable tools are three-wire and designed for hard or extra-hard usage. **[OSHA]**They are protected from damage, and they may run through a doorway or pinch point only if something protects them there. **[OSHA]** They are not stapled up, hung from nails or hung by wire. **[OSHA]** Where the cord meets the plug, strain relief must stop a pull from reaching the terminals. **[OSHA]** A cord repaired with tape and a missing ground pin fails all of that.

Live circuits. Nobody works where they could contact a live circuit unless it is deenergized and grounded or guarded by insulation or other means. **[OSHA]** Before work starts the employer finds out where live circuits are, posts signs and tells the crew. **[OSHA]**Circuits that have been deenergized are made inoperative and tagged at every point where they could be turned back on. **[OSHA]**

Today: run every cord you will use through your hands before you plug it in.

Ask the crew

1. Where is the GFCI for the outlet you are using, and when did someone last press test?
2. Which cord on this site runs through a doorway, and what protects it there?

PART 8

6. Backing up and spotters

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

A vehicle with a blocked rear view backs up only with a working reverse alarm or a spotter signaling. Spotters stand where the driver can see them, and the driver stops the moment they lose sight of the spotter.

Read this to the crew

On average, 39 percent of all occupational fatalities are transportation incidents. **[OSHA]**On a site, the version of that which kills people on foot is the backing truck. The rule for vehicles whose driver cannot see behind them has two options:

> “The vehicle has a reverse signal alarm audible above the surrounding noise level or:”

> “The vehicle is backed up only when an observer signals that it is safe to do so.”

"Audible above the surrounding noise level" is the part people skip. An alarm nobody can hear over the compressor is not an alarm. Earthmoving and compacting equipment with a blocked rear view follows the same logic: it is not used in reverse without a working reverse alarm that stands out from the noise, or a signal from someone that it is safe. **[OSHA]** Bidirectional machines such as loaders and rollers also need a horn that can be heard, used as needed when moving either way. **[OSHA]**

If you are the spotter. The rule turns on your signal: the vehicle backs up only when you signal that it is safe. **[OSHA]** So agree the signals before the first move, and when the signal stops, the truck stops. Stay out of the path it is backing into.

If you are the driver. Before you start the shift, the vehicle is checked: service brakes, parking brake, tires, horn, steering, coupling devices, seat belts, controls and safety devices, and any defect is fixed before it moves. **[OSHA]** Seat belts meeting the federal standards are installed in all site vehicles. **[OSHA]** Use them.

If you are on foot. The rule exists because the driver cannot see behind the vehicle. [OSHA] Treat every running engine that way, and do not cross behind one until the driver knows you are there.

Ask the crew

1. Which vehicle on this site has a reverse alarm you cannot hear from 30 feet away?
2. Who spots for the dump trucks today, and where do they stand?

PART 9

7. Trench safety: five feet, four feet, two feet

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Five feet deep needs a protective system unless it is solid rock. Four feet deep needs a ladder within 25 feet of everyone. Spoils stay two feet back. A competent person inspects before every shift and after rain.

Read this to the crew

Cave-ins are the greatest risk to life in trench work. [OSHA] OSHA's answer is three words: slope it, shore it, shield it. [OSHA] Here is when each applies.

> “Trenches 5 feet (1.5 meters) deep or greater require a protective system unless the excavation is made entirely in stable rock.”

Below 5 feet, a competent person may decide a system is not required. [OSHA] At 20 feet or deeper, the system has to be designed by a registered professional engineer or built from tabulated data an engineer approved. [OSHA]

Getting out. Once a trench is 4 feet deep, there is a ladder, stairway or ramp placed so nobody has to travel more than 25 feet sideways to reach it. [OSHA] If the ladder is at one end of a 60-foot trench, the far end is out of compliance and, more to the point, out of reach.

The edge. Spoil piles and equipment stay at least 2 feet back from the edge, or retaining devices keep them from falling in. [OSHA] Heavy equipment stays away from the edge. [OSHA]

The air and the water. Where low oxygen or a hazardous atmosphere could exist, the air is tested before anyone enters a trench deeper than 4 feet. [OSHA] Nobody works in a trench with

water collecting in it unless precautions such as support systems, pumping or a harness and lifeline are in place. [OSHA]

The inspection. A competent person inspects the excavation, the area around it and the protective system before work starts, as needed through the shift and after every rainstorm. [OSHA] Underground utilities are located before the first bucket goes in. [OSHA]

Ask the crew

1. How deep is today's cut, and what is protecting the people in it?
2. From the far end of the trench, how far is it to the ladder?

PART 10

8. Heat illness: water, rest, shade

Any workplace

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Drink on a schedule, take every break, rest somewhere cool, and watch the new people. Confusion or slurred speech is heat stroke: call 911 and cool the person with ice or cold water until help arrives.

Read this to the crew

Heat illness is preventable, and every year thousands of workers get sick from it and some die. [OSHA] The risk factors are heavy physical work, hot conditions, not being used to the heat, and clothing that holds heat in. [OSHA] That describes most of what we do in summer.

Water. Drink often, not just when you are thirsty; thirst is a late signal. [OSHA]On jobs longer than two hours, water alone is not enough: electrolyte drinks are needed because sweat takes salt with it. [OSHA]

Rest. Breaks get longer and more frequent as the heat rises, and they only work if they are taken. In hot conditions, skipping breaks is not safe. [OSHA]

Shade. A cool place to recover: shade, an air-conditioned vehicle, a tent, a room with fans. Breaks in a cool place mean people are ready to go back sooner. [OSHA]

New people. Assume anyone who has done this job for less than one to two weeks is not acclimatized. [OSHA] In their first days, every symptom is taken seriously and they are allowed to stop. [OSHA]

If someone goes down. OSHA's first aid, word for word:

> “Take the affected worker to a cooler area (e.g., shade or air conditioning).”

> “Never leave a worker with heat-related illness alone.”

> “When in doubt, cool the worker and call 911.”

Confusion, slurred speech or unconsciousness are heat stroke: call 911 immediately and cool the worker with ice or cold water until help arrives. **[OSHA]** Do not waste time working out which heat illness it is; several can happen together. **[OSHA]**

Ask the crew

1. Where is the water, and is it cool and close to where we are actually working?
2. Who is in their first two weeks on this crew?

PART 11

9. Hearing protection

Any workplace

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

If you have to raise your voice to someone 3 feet away, the noise is probably over 85 decibels and can damage your hearing. That damage is permanent. Controls come first; plugs or muffs cover the rest.

Read this to the crew

Here is the test you can do without a meter:

> “Noise levels are measured in decibels, and exposure over 85 decibels can damage your hearing. If you need to raise your voice to speak to someone 3 feet away, noise levels might be over 85 decibels (dBA).”

Three signs noise is a problem where you work: ringing or humming in your ears when you leave, having to shout to someone an arm's length away, and hearing that comes back slowly after the shift. **[OSHA]**

Why it matters. Loud noise kills the hearing cells in the inner ear. The loss is permanent and cannot be fixed by surgery or medicine, and it takes the high frequencies first, which is where

speech lives. [OSHA] Hearing aids help but do not restore normal hearing. [OSHA]

What the rules say. In construction, when sound levels exceed the Table D-2 limits, feasible administrative or engineering controls are used first, and hearing protection brings the exposure within the table where controls fall short. [OSHA] In general industry a hearing conservation program kicks in at an 8-hour average of 85 decibels, with hearing protectors available at no cost. [OSHA]

Controls you can see. Quieter tools, maintained and lubricated machines, a barrier between the noise and the people, running the noisy job when fewer people are around, and distance: in open space, doubling your distance from the source cuts the noise by about 6 decibels. [OSHA]

Plugs and muffs. OSHA calls them acceptable but less desirable than controls, used while controls are put in or where controls are not feasible. [OSHA] They only work if they fit and are worn the whole time the noise is on.

Ask the crew

1. Which tool or machine on this site makes you raise your voice to the person next to you?
2. Who had ringing ears after yesterday's shift?

PART 12

10. PPE: head, eyes and hands

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Hard hats where anything can fall or strike. Safety glasses with side shields where anything flies. Gloves chosen for the actual hazard: cuts, chemicals, heat. PPE the standards require is provided at no cost, and it only works if it fits and is worn.

Read this to the crew

PPE is the last line, after engineering, work practice and administrative controls, and the employer must provide it and make sure it is used properly when those controls do not do enough. [OSHA]Three pieces come up every day.

Head.

> “Employees working in areas where there is a possible danger of head injury from impact, or from falling or flying objects, or from electrical shock and burns, shall be protected by protective helmets.”

"Possible danger" is a low bar on purpose. If someone is working above you, or you are under a load, or a steel edge is at head height, the hat is on.

Eyes. Eye or face protection is used wherever there are flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, acids, gases, vapors or harmful light. **[OSHA]** Where the hazard is flying objects, the eyewear must have side protection; clip-on or slide-on side shields that meet the rule are fine. **[OSHA]** Regular prescription glasses are not safety glasses.

Hands. Gloves are selected for the hazard in front of you: skin absorption of harmful substances, severe cuts, abrasions, punctures, chemical burns, thermal burns, and temperature extremes. **[OSHA]** The same leather glove does not cover all of those.

Who pays and who checks. PPE required by the construction standards is provided by the employer at no cost to you, with listed exceptions. **[OSHA]** If you bring your own, the employer is still responsible for making sure it is adequate and maintained. **[OSHA]** You should have been trained on when it is needed, what kind, how to put it on and remove it, its limits and its care. **[OSHA]** And fit decides everything: PPE that does not fit is the difference between being covered and being exposed. **[OSHA]**

Ask the crew

1. Which task today throws chips, dust or sparks, and does everyone near it have side shields on?
2. Whose gloves are wrong for the chemical or the blade they are handling?

PART 13

11. Fire: extinguishers, fuel and smoking

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Know where the nearest extinguisher is; on site there is one within 100 feet. Fuel lives in approved cans, no more than 25 gallons outside a cabinet, with no ignition within 50 feet of where it is used. No smoking near anything that burns.

Read this to the crew

Three fire rules for a construction site, and where to find each one on this job.

Extinguishers.

> “A fire extinguisher, rated not less than 2A, shall be provided for each 3,000 square feet of the protected building area, or major fraction thereof. Travel distance from any point of the protected area to the nearest fire extinguisher shall not exceed 100 feet.”

In a multistory building there is at least one on each floor, next to the stairway. **[OSHA]**All firefighting equipment is inspected periodically and kept working, and defective equipment is replaced immediately. **[OSHA]** Walk to the nearest one now in your head. If you cannot picture it, find it after this talk.

Fuel. Flammable liquids are stored and handled only in approved containers; for 5 gallons or less that means approved safety cans or DOT-approved containers. **[OSHA]** No more than 25 gallons sit in a room outside an approved storage cabinet. **[OSHA]** Category 1, 2 or 3 flammable liquids are used only where there is no open flame or other ignition source within 50 feet. **[OSHA]** That includes the heater, the grinder and the cigarette.

Smoking.

> “Smoking shall be prohibited at or in the vicinity of operations which constitute a fire hazard, and shall be conspicuously posted: "No Smoking or Open Flame."”

And combustible materials are piled with the stability of the pile in mind and never higher than 20 feet. **[OSHA]**

Hot work. When welding or cutting cannot be moved somewhere safe and the fire hazards cannot be moved either, the sparks and slag are confined, extinguishing equipment is right there and ready, and where normal precautions are not enough a fire watch stays through the work and long enough after to be sure nothing is burning. **[OSHA]**

Ask the crew

1. Where is the nearest extinguisher to where you will work today, and when was it last checked?
2. What ignition sources are within 50 feet of where we fuel up?

PART 14

12. Lockout/tagout: verify before you touch

General industry (29 CFR 1910)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Prepare, shut down, isolate, lock or tag, release stored energy, then try to start it to prove it is dead. Your lock comes off only by your hand. Never try to restart a machine someone else has locked out.

Read this to the crew

Hazardous energy is not only electricity: mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical and thermal energy all count, and the unexpected start-up or release of stored energy during servicing can kill or maim. **[OSHA]** OSHA's examples are a steam valve opening on a crew repairing the pipe downstream, a jammed conveyor releasing on the person clearing it, and a short shocking the person repairing the machine. **[OSHA]**
The general industry standard, 1910.147, sets the sequence, and it is a sequence, not a checklist you can reorder. **[OSHA]**

1. **Prepare.** The authorized employee knows the type and amount of energy, its hazards and how to control it. **[OSHA]**
2. **Shut down** using the machine's own procedure, in an orderly way. **[OSHA]**
3. **Isolate.** Every energy isolating device needed is located and operated. **[OSHA]**
4. **Lock or tag** each isolating device. **[OSHA]**
5. **Release stored energy.** Anything stored or residual is relieved, disconnected, restrained or otherwise made safe. **[OSHA]**
6. **Verify.**

> “Prior to starting work on machines or equipment that have been locked out or tagged out, the authorized employee shall verify that isolation and deenergization of the machine or equipment have been accomplished.”

Step six is the one that saves lives: try to start it. If it starts, you missed a source.
Whose lock. Each lock or tag is removed by the person who put it on, with a documented procedure for the rare case that person is not available. **[OSHA]** If you work near a locked-out machine but do not service it, your job is simpler: know what the lock means and never try to restart or re-energize equipment that is locked or tagged out. **[OSHA]**

Ask the crew

1. On the machine you service most, what energy is still stored after the power is off?
2. Has anyone here ever found a lock they did not recognize, and what did they do?

PART 15

13. Silica dust: wet it, vacuum it, never sweep it dry

Construction (29 CFR 1926)

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE MINUTE

Cutting, grinding or drilling concrete, brick or stone makes dust that scars lungs for life. Use the water or vacuum control Table 1 lists for the task, wear the respirator it calls for, and never dry sweep or blow the dust.

Read this to the crew

Sand, stone, concrete, brick and mortar all contain crystalline silica. Cut, grind, drill or crush them and you make respirable particles small enough to travel deep into the lungs. **[OSHA]** The diseases are silicosis, which is incurable, lung cancer, COPD and kidney disease, and in most cases they arrive after years of exposure. **[OSHA]** That delay is why people do not take the dust seriously, and why the rule does not leave it to judgment.

Table 1. The construction standard lists 18 common tasks with the control that goes with each: water fed to the blade, a vacuum dust collection system, and in some cases a respirator. **[OSHA]** For every task on the table, the employer fully implements the listed engineering controls, work practices and respiratory protection, unless exposure is measured and controlled another way. **[OSHA]** OSHA's example: a handheld saw with an integrated water feed needs no respirator outdoors for four hours or less, but indoors or for longer the operator needs a respirator with an assigned protection factor of at least 10. **[OSHA]**

Housekeeping. This is where good crews slip:

> “The employer shall not allow dry sweeping or dry brushing where such activity could contribute to employee exposure to respirable crystalline silica unless wet sweeping, HEPA-filtered vacuuming or other methods that minimize the likelihood of exposure are not feasible.”

Compressed air is restricted the same way: not for cleaning silica dust unless a ventilation system captures the cloud it makes. **[OSHA]**

The rest of the program. A written exposure control plan, a competent person to run it, training on the health effects and the tasks that expose you, and medical exams every three years for anyone who has to wear a respirator 30 or more days a year. **[OSHA]**

Ask the crew

1. Which saw, grinder or drill on this site cuts masonry today, and is its water or vacuum running?
2. How do we clean up the dust at the end of the task?

Sources

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- OSHA, Portable Ladder Safety (QuickCard) (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.501, Duty to have fall protection (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.502, Fall protection systems criteria and practices (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.25, Housekeeping (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.416, Electrical, general requirements (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.22, Walking-working surfaces, general requirements (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.250, General requirements for storage (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, Hand and Power Tools (OSHA 3080) (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.300, Tools, general requirements (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.302, Power-operated hand tools (read 2026-10-07)
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- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.404, Wiring design and protection (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.405, Wiring methods, components, and equipment for general use (read 2026-10-07)
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- OSHA, Motor Vehicle Safety (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.601, Motor vehicles (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.602, Material handling equipment (read 2026-10-07)
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- OSHA, Trenching and Excavation (read 2026-10-07)

- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.651, Specific excavation requirements (read 2026-10-07)
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- OSHA, Heat: Water. Rest. Shade (read 2026-10-07)
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- OSHA, Occupational Noise Exposure (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.52, Occupational noise exposure (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational noise exposure (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, Personal Protective Equipment (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.100, Head protection (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.102, Eye and face protection (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.138, Hand protection (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.95, Criteria for personal protective equipment (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.150, Fire protection (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.152, Flammable liquids (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.151, Fire prevention (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.352, Fire prevention (welding and cutting) (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout) (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.147, Lockout/tagout (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, OSHA's Respirable Crystalline Silica Standard for Construction (Fact Sheet) (read 2026-10-07)
- OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.1153, Respirable crystalline silica (read 2026-10-07)

Sign-in sheet: 5-minute safety talk

Date: _____ Site: _____ Led by: _____

#	Name (print)	Signature	Company / crew
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

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