Handle Glass Safely Meeting Kit

What's At Stake

The risk of injury from the storage, handling, and disposal of glassware or broken glass exists in most workplaces. For situations involving broken glass, workers should know the safe handling procedures, the necessity of proper protective equipment, and the importance of obtaining prompt and effective first aid for injuries.

What's the Danger

PEOPLE WORKING WITH GLASS-GLAZIERS

A glazier is a person who works with glass – installing, repairing, or replacing glass in commercial, industrial, or residential buildings or in automobiles.

The main duties of a glazier include:

- Cutting, grinding, polishing, and drilling glass.
- Handling of sheets of glass in the warehouse, during transportation, and at the work site. This handling may involve using slings and power lift devices.
- Applying adhesives, sealants, and caulks.
- Using, cleaning, and maintaining various types of equipment.
- Administrative tasks such as preparing estimates and invoices, supervising assistants, and ensuring compliance with building codes.

DANGER/HARMS FOR GLAZIERS

Glaziers are susceptible to more than accidental hazards. They are prone to ergonomic hazards due to the prolonged, awkward working postures which can cause musculoskeletal injuries. Glaziers face many chemical hazards, as well. For example, there are case reports of skin disorders in glaziers, related to their exposure to quartz dust or sealants containing polysulfide polymers. Respiratory problems are reported by glaziers, stemming from the inhalation of rock wool, glass fibers and isocyanate foam.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reports that glass installers, or "glaziers" have a higher rate of injuries and illnesses than the national average for all construction industry occupations. Glaziers spend much of their time standing, bending, or reaching – often at high altitudes – and most lift and maneuver heavy materials like large glass plates. Typical injuries for glaziers include deep cuts from tools and glass and falls from ladders and scaffolding.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN GLASS OPERATIONS

- Work at heights, including work on ladders and scaffolds.
- Handling large, awkward, heavy sheets of glass.
- Working in awkward positions and standing for long periods of time.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Injuries from falling objects or being crushed by heavy sheets of glass.
- Cuts and lacerations from sharp edges of glass or the tools used.
- Eye injuries from flying particles when cutting and grinding glass.
- Exposure to dust from cutting, grinding, drilling and polishing of glass.
- Exposure to other materials and equipment such as wood or metal when creating framing.
- Using hand tools and powered hand tools.
- Exposures to solvents in adhesives, sealants, etching chemicals, and cleaning products.
- Working outdoors in hot or cold weather.
- Working alone.
- Travel to reach job sites.

GLAZIERS PREVENTATIVE MEASURES CHECKLIST

- Follow roper procedures for working at heights, including a fall protection plan.
- Work safely when on ladders and scaffolds.
- Apply safe lifting techniques.
- Ensure that tools and equipment are in good working order. Use ergonomic friendly tools.
- Know how to use tools and equipment safely, including sharp blades or edges.
- Use correct personal protective equipment such as eye protection when cutting and grinding.
- Use protective footwear when handling glass sheets.
- Take adequate breaks to avoid fatigue.
- Know first aid and keep a first-aid kit within easy access.
- Learn how to prevent heat stress and cold stress when working in extreme hot and cold environments.
- Carry a mobile phone to contact with a designated person when working alone.
- Drive safely, including in winter conditions. Do not drive distracted.
- Use metal-mesh or other cut- or stab-resistant gloves in all work with sharp knives or other sharp tools.
- Wear appropriate respiratory and eye protection equipment and gloves.
- Protect hands with chemical-resistant gloves; if impractical, use a barrier cream.
- Use safe lifting techniques for heavy or awkward loads; use mechanical aids to assist in lifting.

BEST SAFETY TIPS TO PROTECT ALL GLASSWORKERS

Proper clothing and safety gear are crucial. Glaziers cannot work unless they’re wearing proper gloves (or gauntlets), hard hats, work boots and safety goggles. Thick coveralls or work aprons are often best to protect workers from flying particles. Other gear may include kneepads, wrist guards and long-sleeved shirts.

- All power tools must be regularly checked and turned in for repairs as soon as they start malfunctioning.
- Only limited work should be handled in confined spaces. Toxic fumes and flying particles make it necessary to create larger work spaces for glaziers.
- Fully stocked first-aid kits must always be kept nearby.
- A comprehensive safety training program must be provided before work begins.

- The least toxic glass polishing cleaners, caulking materials, glues, and adhesives should ever be ordered for glaziers.
- Respirators may often be required. Inhaling harmful dust and particles is just too risky.
- Fatigue should be prevented. This can be achieved by rotating specific work duties throughout the day.

FINAL WORD

The risk of injury from the storage, handling and disposal of glassware or broken glass exists in most workplaces. Broken glass can cause lacerations, cuts, and puncture wounds which may result in severed arteries or tendons, amputations, eye injuries, or exposure to disease.