

# Plastering Work – Staying Safe While Plastering Outdoors Meeting Kit



## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Outdoor plastering might seem like a straightforward task, but it exposes workers to several real hazards, especially when weather, ladders, and materials come into play. Working in the elements means dealing with wind, rain, uneven ground, and direct sun, all of which can impact your safety and the quality of your work. One small slip on a wet surface or one wrong move on a scaffold can lead to serious injuries like falls, sprains, or even long-term back problems. If you're not paying attention to conditions or using the right gear, you're putting yourself and others at risk. Staying sharp and using safe practices ensures you go home injury-free—and the job gets done right.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

Outdoor plastering may look routine, but it involves serious hazards that can cause injuries if not managed properly. Uneven terrain, unpredictable weather, and exposure to chemicals or heights all create risks that workers need to stay alert to.

### Slips, Trips, and Falls

Uneven ground, mud, or debris can cause workers to lose footing while mixing or applying plaster outdoors. Rain or moisture can turn walkways and work surfaces into slip zones. Falls from scaffolding or ladders are one of the most common and serious injuries on outdoor plastering jobs. According to OSHA, falls remain the leading cause of fatalities in construction.

### Ladder and Scaffold Risks

Plasterers often work at height on ladders or scaffolding. These surfaces can become unstable due to soft ground, improper setup, or wind. Climbing with tools or buckets of plaster increases the chance of falls or dropped materials, putting both the worker and those below at risk.

### Heat and Sun Exposure

Plastering in direct sunlight for long periods can cause heat exhaustion or dehydration. Without regular breaks and proper hydration, workers are at risk of heat-related illnesses, especially during the summer months in the U.S. and Canada.

### Chemical and Skin Irritation

Plaster contains alkaline substances that can irritate the skin or eyes. Extended exposure without proper protection can lead to rashes, burns, or long-term skin conditions. Splashes to the eyes can cause painful injury and even temporary vision problems.

### **Poor Visibility and Wind Conditions**

Working outdoors exposes you to shifting weather. Gusts of wind can blow debris or dust into your eyes, while poor lighting late in the day can increase the risk of mistakes, slips, or misapplied material.

**Real World Case:** A crew member was plastering the exterior of a school building on a windy day without securing the scaffold base. A sudden gust caused the structure to wobble, and the worker fell six feet, injuring his shoulder. He missed three weeks of work. Proper setup and awareness of weather could have prevented the fall.

## **HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF**

Plastering outdoors comes with challenges you can't always control—like weather or terrain—but how you prepare makes all the difference. Staying safe is about using the right gear, setting up smart, and working with awareness.

### **Use the Right PPE Every Time**

- Wear waterproof gloves and long sleeves to protect your skin from plaster splashes.
- Use safety goggles or a face shield to guard against wind-blown debris or plaster spray.
- Wear slip-resistant boots for better traction on wet or uneven surfaces.
- Consider using sunscreen and a brimmed hat when working long hours in direct sun.

### **Set Up Your Work Area Safely**

Always inspect the ground before setting up ladders or scaffolding. If it's soft or uneven, lay down stable planks or support pads. Make sure all scaffold components are locked in place and level. Keep tools and buckets out of walkways to prevent tripping.

### **Be Weather-Wise**

Check the forecast before starting any outdoor plastering job. Wind, rain, and extreme heat all require extra caution—or sometimes postponement. If strong winds pick up mid-task, stop work on ladders or scaffolds until conditions improve.

### **Stay Hydrated and Take Breaks**

Working outdoors, especially in summer, means you'll need to drink plenty of water. Dehydration and heat exhaustion can creep up fast. Take regular breaks in the shade and pace yourself, especially when carrying heavy materials.

### **Work Smart at Heights**

If you're climbing with tools or plaster, use a tool belt or have someone pass items up to you. Maintain three points of contact when on a ladder—two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand. Never lean too far off a ladder or scaffold edge just to reach one more spot.

**Example:** If you're plastering a tall exterior wall and notice the scaffold swaying slightly when you move, stop and check that it's level and locked. Ignoring minor movement could lead to a fall—and a preventable injury.

**Bonus Tip:** Keep extra PPE and a first aid kit on-site, especially for outdoor jobs. If someone gets splashed with plaster or overheats, quick treatment makes a big difference.

## FINAL WORD

Plastering outdoors demands more than skill—it requires attention to safety every step of the way. From weather to work surfaces, staying alert and using the right gear keeps you protected. Take a few extra minutes to do it safely, and you'll get the job done right without injury.

---