

Every construction site, no matter how large or complex, can be a dangerous place to work. Often, they are home to large pieces of heavy equipment, tools, materials and excavations. Those who work on construction sites must receive training to work in this environment. An owner or supervisor is also ultimately responsible for reducing the risks as much as possible. This responsibility to keep workers safe extends to keeping the public safe as well.

Site Access During Construction

Upon arrival at the jobsite, a hazard assessment should be conducted. Aside from the hazards that may affect workers, consider those hazards that could harm the public. During construction, one of the best ways to ensure the public is not in harm's way is to set a boundary. A fence can help prevent people from entering the site. It also helps prevent objects from escaping and harming those passing by the jobsite. Keep in mind, once the fence is up, it is just as important to maintain it.

There are many different types of fences. Not every type will suit every jobsite. Consider the following:

- The volume and type of site visitors
- The type of construction work
- Population of the area
- Location of the building and proximity to other buildings
- Existing boundaries

What Are The Hazards?

Falling Objects – workers must be protected from falling objects with overhead barriers. Ensure objects and materials are secured, and netting and toe boards are installed on scaffolding when required.

Scaffolding – scaffolds are used for many reasons. Whatever the reason, it is important to ensure that the public is not within close proximity during the construction or dismantling of a scaffold.

Vehicles – traffic control plans are required for workers when they are at risk of vehicular traffic. It is important to consider how traffic entering and leaving a site will affect pedestrians. Another consideration is whether the work being done will force pedestrians onto the street due to closure of the sidewalk.

Storage of Materials – ensure that all materials for the job are stored inside the fence. Any materials stored and

stacked outside the fence pose a danger to pedestrians who are unaware of the possibility of tripping over materials.

Openings – stairwells, manholes and excavations pose a serious hazard to workers and pedestrians alike when unprotected. For legislation visit: www.saskatchewan.ca/business/safety-in-the-workplace



Vulnerable Groups

Children, the elderly and people with certain disabilities may need special attention. Construction sites such as schools and hospitals need careful forethought and planning.

Children tend to be drawn to construction sites as they look like exciting places to play. It is critical to do everything possible to keep them out of the site and away from danger.

Some best practices to follow:

- Adequately secure sites when finishing work for the day
- Fence off excavations and ensure secure covers for open holes
- Immobilize heavy equipment, and if possible, lock this equipment in a compound
- Store building materials (manhole rings, pipes, bags of cement, etc.) so they cannot topple and roll over
- Remove all access ladders from excavations, scaffolds and rooftops

Not all construction sites are the same, and can have varying levels of danger. It is crucial that a hazard assessment is conducted and a program to control hazards is established. This will ensure the safety of all employees, pedestrians and the public.