



# BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

Syracuse Builders Exchange, NY

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## OSHA Develops Database of Chemical Information

OSHA recently launched a database of information on more than 800 chemicals commonly found in the workplace. The OSHA/EPA Occupational Chemical Database allows users to quickly and easily retrieve information on chemicals such as their physical properties and exposure limits. The database compiles information from several government agencies and organizations, including the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Department of Transportation.

## Surprising Stats on Safety Gear

**Personal protective equipment sizing hasn't changed in 30 years.**

When it comes to safety gear, what percentage of your work force is difficult to fit properly? Think high.

A recent study says one-in-four didn't properly fit into protective equipment. And, of course, ill-fitting equipment means workers are less safe.

So these days, it's more important than ever to get workers to test equipment before it's purchased and check with

them afterward to see if it fits as expected.

### Measurements are dated

Current fall harnesses didn't properly fit at least 24% of the men and 31% of the women in the study recently published in *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*. Given the number of fatal falls each year – about 360 – the fit statistics are frightening numbers. Why doesn't the PPE fit properly? At least part of the reason is that current sizing for commercial harnesses is based on human body measurements from the 1970's and 80's. Those measures don't match today's workforce, which is more diverse and includes more women.

### 8 Sizes fit (almost) all

This information provides some challenges to safety pros when it comes to selecting safety gear for workers.

But help is on the way. The National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) studied 216 men and women, ages 18 – 56, with white, Hispanic, African-American and multiracial backgrounds.

The researchers then created eight models for better defining harness size groups. They claim these eight models are adopted;

safety pros will have to keep a close watch on safety gear.

## New QuickCard™ Focuses on Carbon Monoxide Hazards

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning is the subject of a new QuickCard recently posted to OSHA's Web site. The card, available in both English and Spanish, contains a list of common sources, symptoms, and effects of carbon monoxide exposure, along with a list of preventive measures employees can take to protect themselves from carbon monoxide hazards. It can be downloaded from OSHA's Web site on the QuickCards page, or can be ordered by calling OSHA's publications office at (202) 693-1888.



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# MONTHLY TOOLBOX TALK

## Demolition Dangers

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Although construction work normally involves building, some jobs may require demolition. Demolition work poses many of the same hazards associated with construction. Some of the challenges you may face during a demolition project include respiratory hazards, blasting, and occupied structures.

**Respiratory hazards** are very common on demolition jobs. To start with there is a great deal of dirt and dust in the air which can be irritating to your nose, throat, and lungs. More importantly, there could be asbestos in the air and silica dust is almost guaranteed to be present. Asbestos can be found in ceiling tiles, insulation, floor tiles, and on structural beams. When asbestos-containing materials are handled or disturbed, asbestos fibers are released into the air. Silica is found in brick, stone, and concrete. When these materials are cut, broken, or chipped silica dust is created. Anytime asbestos or silica dust is present, you need to be wearing respiratory protection. Additional PPE will be required when you are working near asbestos.

**Blasting** is very effective but also very dangerous. To begin with, only trained and qualified personnel should handle explosives. Explosives must be stored properly, precisely inventoried, and carefully secured.

The intense noise and shock waves from blasting can cause permanent damage to your hearing. Always wear hearing

protection. There should be a designated safe zone, and a head count should be made before detonation.

**Occupied Structures** undergo partial demolition during renovation and remodeling projects. This work exposes construction workers and the occupants to a variety of dangers. If the occupants are present during your working hours, you will need to take steps to keep them out of the work areas and protect them from exposure to hazardous materials (like asbestos, silica, and any chemicals you're using). If you're working nights and occupants will be in the building during the day you need to make sure all areas are completely safe for civilians before they arrive in the morning. When a structure is in use the utilities will probably have to be left on. You will have to take special steps to isolate and lock out any utilities that you have to remove, alter, or relocate.

Demolition is a lot more complicated than knocking down walls and breaking things. It can be dangerous and you need to make sure you don't get knocked down or broken.

<p><b>Safety Reminder:</b> Don't trust the electrical wiring plan. Always test the circuit before beginning any work involving electrical wiring.</p>
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