EHS CONCEPTS
THE WAYS OF SAFETY

A FIELD GUIDE

Trade by Trade

The Task That Hurts People in Every Trade

12 trades. The exact task, the hazard, and the control that stops it. Plus a one-page toolbox talk checklist.

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Why This Guide

Most people who get hurt on the job don't get hurt doing something new. They get hurt doing the task they've done a hundred times, on the day they skipped one step to save time.

Every trade has that task. The electrician who trusts the breaker label. The pipe crew that steps into a trench "for just a minute." The rigging crew swinging a load near a power line.

This guide goes trade by trade. For each one you get the exact task, the hazard, and the control that stops it. Use it for a toolbox talk, a pre-task plan, or a walk with your crew.

Plan the task. Name the hazard. Put the control in before the work starts. That's how safety works on purpose.

— Ryan L. Rinehart, Founder, EHS Concepts

01 · ELECTRICIAN

Test Before You Touch

THE TASK

Tying into a "dead" panel or circuit to skip a shutdown, trusting the breaker label instead of testing.

THE HAZARD

Mislabeled or backfed circuits stay live. Shock, electrocution and arc flash.

STOP IT WITH

Lockout/tagout on every source, then test before touch with a meter you just proved on a known live source.

02 · IRONWORKER / STEEL ERECTOR

Tie Off Before the Edge

THE TASK

Connecting beams and walking steel at the leading edge before the deck or perimeter cable is in.

THE HAZARD

One step or one swinging member puts you off the edge.

STOP IT WITH

A fall protection plan, rated anchors, and tie-off before you reach the edge, not after.

03 • ROOFER

Find the Edge First

THE TASK

Backing up while tearing off or rolling out material near the edge, or stepping on a skylight.

THE HAZARD

Roof edges, skylights and holes. One misstep and you're on the ground.

STOP IT WITH

Guardrails or warning lines, screened or covered skylights, and personal fall arrest at 6 feet and up.

04 • WELDER / HOT WORK

Clear It Before You Strike an Arc

THE TASK

Cutting or welding near combustibles, or on a drum or tank that "used to" hold fuel.

THE HAZARD

Fires that start after you leave, and explosions from vapor left inside a container.

STOP IT WITH

Move or shield combustibles, clean and test containers first, and keep a fire watch where required, with an extinguisher ready.

05 · EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

If You Can't See Them, Stop

THE TASK

Backing a loader, dozer or dump truck in a work zone with people on foot.

THE HAZARD

Struck-by and run-over in the blind zone. The operator never sees them.

STOP IT WITH

A spotter with agreed signals, working backup alarms, and foot traffic routed out of the travel path.

06 · TRENCH / PIPE / UTILITY CREW

Never Enter an Unprotected Trench

THE TASK

Stepping into an unprotected trench "for just a minute" to set pipe or grab a fitting.

THE HAZARD

Walls collapse with no warning, and you can't outrun the soil.

STOP IT WITH

A protective system at 5 feet and deeper unless in stable rock, spoils 2 feet back, and a ladder or other safe exit within 25 feet in trenches 4 feet or deeper.

07 · CARPENTER / FRAMER

Cover It, Mark It, Secure It

THE TASK

Framing or sheeting near unguarded floor openings and wall edges, and reaching from the top of a ladder.

THE HAZARD

Uncovered or unmarked holes, open edges and overreach falls.

STOP IT WITH

Hole covers secured and marked "HOLE" or "COVER," guardrails on open sides, and move the ladder instead of leaning out.

08 · SCAFFOLD BUILDER

Build It Right Before You Use It

THE TASK

Climbing cross braces and working an incomplete or unplanked scaffold during erection.

THE HAZARD

Falls, plus collapse from missing ties, base plates or mudsills.

STOP IT WITH

A competent person directing erection, proper access, full planking, and fall protection above 10 feet.

09 · LABORER

Every Task Gets a Plan

THE TASK

Cleanup, flagging, and spotting next to moving equipment, with no task brief.

THE HAZARD

Struck-by from swinging loads, rotating cabs and backing vehicles.

STOP IT WITH

Barricade the swing radius, wear high-vis, and make eye contact with the operator before you cross.

10 · PLUMBER / PIPEFITTER

Prove the Line Is Dead

THE TASK

Breaking into a line or opening a flange that someone said was drained and bled.

THE HAZARD

Stored pressure, hot fluids or chemicals spraying out of a "dead" line.

STOP IT WITH

Isolate, lock and bleed, verify zero energy at a drain or gauge, and stand clear of the line of fire.

11 · PAINTER

Test the Air First

THE TASK

Spraying or coating in a tank, pit or small room, working off a ladder or lift.

THE HAZARD

Solvent vapors that overcome you or ignite, plus falls from height.

STOP IT WITH

Permit-required confined space procedures with air testing, forced ventilation, the right respirator, and fall protection on lifts.

12 · CRANE / RIGGING CREW

Look Up Before You Lift

THE TASK

Swinging a boom or load near overhead power lines while a tagline hand holds on.

THE HAZARD

Contact with the line energizes the crane, the load and everyone touching it.

STOP IT WITH

Plan the lift, keep the required clearance from power lines (or de-energize), use a dedicated spotter, and never stand under the load.

Toolbox Talk Checklist

Job / task: _____ Date: _____ Leader: _____

- [ ] We named today's task and walked the work area.
- [ ] We named the hazard that could hurt or kill someone on this task.
- [ ] Energy sources (electrical, pressure, moving parts) are isolated, locked out and verified.
- [ ] Fall exposures are protected: edges, holes, ladders, scaffolds, lifts.
- [ ] Struck-by and caught-in zones are barricaded; spotters and signals are agreed.
- [ ] Overhead lines and buried utilities are identified and clearances set.
- [ ] Air is tested and ventilation is in place for tanks, pits and tight spaces.
- [ ] Hot work: combustibles cleared, fire watch where required, extinguisher ready.
- [ ] Excavations have a protective system and safe access before anyone enters.
- [ ] The right PPE is on and in good condition.
- [ ] Everyone knows they can stop the work if something changes.
- [ ] Emergency plan: who calls, where help comes in, where the first aid kit is.

Crew sign-in

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

EHS CONCEPTS

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Every one of these has a warning sign. Most get ignored to save time.

Field tools, training and books from EHS Concepts:

thewaysofsafety.com

Important: This guide is general safety guidance for awareness and training. It is not legal advice and does not replace your site's procedures, a qualified person's judgment, or the applicable regulations. Always follow your employer's procedures and the OSHA standard that applies to your work (or MSHA, DOT/FMCSA or other agency rules where they govern). Requirements vary by task, equipment and state.

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