

 **SAFETY TIPS FOR**

**WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION**

The American Society of Safety Engineers offers the following safety tips for women in construction:

* Always wear the correct size and type of PPE. Equipment that does not fit properly, or is not used in the correct manner, can further expose workers to hazardous conditions. This includes breathing apparatus, hardhats, hand protection and other equipment depending on the potential workplace hazards.
* For heavy lifting jobs, look for ways to make the lift require less force, such as using leverage or breaking the load into smaller piles or bundles.
* PPE should not be the only equipment that fits properly. Construction tools, such as hammers, are made for different-sized workers, such as those with smaller hands. Remember that equipment is sized differently to better suit a worker, be it a male or female.
* Find a healthy way to manage workplace stress. If one encounters hostility or harassment, it is important to report them to upper management and human resources.
* Maintain your visibility at a construction site by wearing a reflective/bright vest.
* Individuals smaller in size may not be as visible to other workers, such as those operating heavy machinery and vehicles. Wearing bright, visible vests over existing clothing can help increase visibility during adverse weather conditions such as fog or snow, as well as dusk, pre-dawn or other low visibility conditions, especially for flaggers at a work zone.
* Participate in any available training. Don't be afraid to ask questions and learn as much as possible from the instructors.
* Always wash your hands after working. If hand-washing facilities are not available, carry sanitizing wipes.
* Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Working in summer heat or around equipment that emits high levels of heat can increase the need for water/fluids.
* Women working in construction need proper bathroom facilities, just as their fellow male workers. If conditions are not sanitary, women may consider bringing their own supply of sanitizing wipes, hand soap, etc., and in some cases a small portable toilet. Remember it is unhealthy to hold off from using bathroom facilities, it can lead to infections or other health problems.
* The need for sanitary conditions is even greater for pregnant workers due to the threat of infection and an increased need of bathroom facilities. Proper hydration and taking rest breaks is important. Report pregnancies to company medical personnel as soon as possible.
* Keep a change of clothes (and shoes) in your vehicle.
* Take responsibility for your own safety and health, even while expecting your employer, union, or apprenticeship program to do their part.
* Be familiar with OSHA requirements and your company’s health and safety policies.
* Be pro-active in collaborating with your employer and your union on making the workplace safe and healthy for all workers.