

Rochester Zen Center Workplace Safety Guidelines

Introduction

Remaining attentive and working carefully are central to Zen training. Staff members and volunteers working on Zen Center projects are expected to maintain a thoughtful vigilance while working.

In general, there is no substitute for **awareness**, and there is no substitute for **experience**. Regarding awareness, it's important not to talk needlessly, but to keep your attention focused on the work in front of you, as well as to keep a kind of "weather eye" on what's happening around you.

With regard to experience, it's important to be honest and straightforward about your level of experience with any tool and any task. Do not hesitate to seek help and advice, or to inform others that you are not confident about using a particular tool or doing a particular task.

- Incident reporting is not enough. We can do much more to prevent accidents if **close calls** of any kind are reported to task supervisors and to the Arnold Park and Chapin Mill Safety Officers.
- Inform your supervisor and others around you about your level of experience with any given task. To give an example: Suppose you're experienced operating riding lawn mowers, but this is the first time that you're operating a particular lawnmower that is new to you. Then it would be appropriate to let others know your situation, so they may be aware that you may make mistakes because you're new to this machine. This would warn them to stand a little farther back, in case you make a mistake, perhaps in backing up, or whatever.

Or if you're operating a backhoe you might say something like "I've had a few months experience with this machine, but I still make mistakes, so please give me room for error by standing well back, and not assuming that I can't make a mistake."

Required Reporting of Injury Accidents and Near Accidents

All incidents involving injury or near injury should be reported using the Center's Injury Accident and Near Accident Report Form. Be sure to include names and contact information for any witnesses. Reports should be signed both by the injured or nearly injured person and by the Zen Center authority receiving the report, and then forwarded as soon as possible both to the Chairman of the Workplace Safety Committee (currently Eryl Kubicka) and to the Business Manager (currently Scott Jennings). The Safety Committee Chairman will then provide copies to the Arnold Park and Chapin Mill Safety Officers (currently Ananta Brückner and Wayman Kubicka, respectively) and the relevant department supervisor.

Minor injuries can turn into major problems if infection sets in, so do report minor injuries with potential for infection. Near misses should always be reported. Investigating the circumstances involved in a near miss can identify problems and lead to improvements and strategies that will

prevent future injuries or incidents. Supervisors should review all incident reports and take the opportunity to implement any changes that would help avert further incidents of a similar type.

Employee injuries that occur on work time fall under the Center's workers' compensation insurance. If you are an employee of the Center, are injured, and go to an emergency room, urgent care facility, or see a physician, you need to inform the health-care provider that the injury is work related. You should also notify the Business Manager directly, so that the Center's insurance carrier can be notified in a timely manner.

Safety Guidelines

The following are some general guidelines to help make our workplace safer. Observance of these guidelines, together with common sense and an attitude of awareness, will go a long way toward eliminating both the number and severity of injuries.

1. Be sure you understand clearly the general nature and the various details of the task assigned to you. If you have any uncertainty, ask your supervisor or an experienced worker for clarification. If English is your second language, be sure to ask for clarification and demonstration of a task. Supervisors should be prepared for this and make a point of explaining tasks slowly and carefully, using physical demonstrations if needed.
2. Be sure you understand the safety guidelines pertaining to any tools used in your task. Power tools always have specific safety precautions relating to their use – know and implement these cautions. Even the use of hand tools involves both ergonomic and safety aspects – again, ask an experienced user to show you the right way. All tools need to be properly maintained (sharpened, lubricated, inspected, parts replaced, etc.); if you notice a tool in need of attention, bring it to the attention of your supervisor immediately. Supervisors should take to heart the importance of giving clear instruction and, when in doubt, should have the person demonstrate that he or she can use the tool properly.
3. Follow instructions and warning labels when using electrical devices. Do not attempt to circumvent proper grounding of such devices (for example, do not use a 3-prong-to-2-prong adapter for tools with 3-prong plugs).
4. Chemicals, solvents, paints and cleaning solutions can be dangerous. Read and follow all label instructions when using such substances. Never remove warning labels from containers or obscure such labels. Likewise, do not remove substances from containers with warning labels and then store the substances in unlabeled containers. When in doubt about a substance and its appropriate use, ask the task supervisor for clarification. Hazardous-materials signs should be prominently posted and easy to read.
5. Personal protective equipment is required for many tasks. Understand when and where such protective gear must be worn, and wear it during the entire task. For example:

- a. Do not enter a “hard hat” area without a hard hat.
 - b. Wear safety glasses when using power tools that could eject fragments or debris that might injure your eyes. Safety glasses are also needed when using hand tools that involve forcible striking (e.g., hammer and chisel, axe or hatchet).
 - c. Safety glasses and/or face shields may be needed when working with some chemicals, paints or solvents. Read and follow label instructions.
 - d. Ear protection is needed around loud machinery or tools. (Prolonged exposure to moderately loud noise can be as damaging as brief exposure to very loud noise.)
 - e. Don’t wear floppy clothing or leave long hair hanging down when operating machinery.
 - f. Gloves appropriate to the task should be worn to protect fingers and hands from blisters, cuts, bruises and chemicals. There are many kinds of gloves; ask for advice if you are unsure which kind to use.
 - g. Safety shoes should be worn for jobs involving lifting or carrying heavy objects. Closed-toed shoes are recommended for any job involving transfer of hot liquids, chemicals, or objects that could cause injury by falling on exposed toes.
 - h. Dust masks or respirators are needed to prevent particulate matter and noxious fumes from entering your lungs. Masks are expensive, so use the mask appropriate for the task. Check with the supervisor if you are unsure.
6. Be aware of and stay out of the way of other workers, especially those using power equipment. Follow the instructions of the task supervisor regarding distance from a group project when equipment is in use.
 7. Keep work areas neat and orderly. Pick up after yourself and be sure walkways are free of hazards as part of your post-task cleanup. Refuse, old rags and papers, and other trash should be moved to approved storage areas (outside of buildings, whenever possible) regularly. Any spills should be dealt with immediately. If spilt substances are toxic or noxious, get assistance and proper protective equipment to clean up. Also be sure to warn others of any slip-and-fall hazards. Certain solvents, as well as oil paints and stains, can spontaneously combust when left on rags. Be sure to dispose of dirty rags in a safe manner. Supervisors are responsible for making sure workers know and follow safe disposal methods.
 8. Watch your step. There are many hazards on the ground or floor of a work environment that could induce a trip, slip or spill. Wear footgear with an appropriate level of traction for the task and environment.
 9. Ladders and working at height:
 - Select the proper ladder for the job to be done. Make sure it is tall enough to reach the work. Ladders should be the proper length and positioned properly to avoid overreaching. Do not use a metal ladder near electricity.

- Safety shoes must be installed on the bottom of all ladders.
 - Before use, inspect ladders for cracks, splinters, or other defects.
 - Do not paint ladders; this hides defects and may make the steps slippery.
 - Ladders must be kept clean, dry, and free of hazards. Ladders should be stored in a dry area in a manner that will avoid causing defects.
 - Ladders that are set against walls or other objects must be secure and set at least one-quarter the length of the ladder away from the object.
 - Do not hand-carry objects, such as tools, up the ladder. A tool belt or other device must be utilized so that the hands are free to climb the ladder.
 - Do not stand on the top of any ladder while performing the job.
 - Ladders set near doors or walk areas through which there is traffic must be marked with signs, barricades, or other appropriate means to prevent potential accidents.
 - Make sure your pant legs and shoe laces are not dragging at your feet, where they could cause you to trip and fall.
10. Use caution around stinging insects (be aware of in-ground bee nests and of wasp nests on buildings, etc.) and biting animals. If unsure of a safe way to handle an animal hazard, contact your supervisor. If you have a known serious allergy, carry an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) and notify your supervisor that you have one.
11. Use extreme caution when working with or around open flames or processes that develop high heat. Be sure there is no chance of a fire starting or spreading unintentionally while working or after leaving. Study and remember fire emergency and building evacuation guidelines and practices.
12. Proper lifting procedures:
- Stand close to the load to eliminate excessive strain on your back muscles. Anticipate the direction the load will be moved after lifting, and position your feet to allow this movement without twisting the trunk of your body.
 - Place one foot alongside the object to be lifted and the other slightly behind the object with your heels flat, not raised. This provides a wider, more stable base from which to lift.
 - Bend your knees and squat down; keep your back erect. Use your leg muscles to lift the object.
 - Take a firm grip from underneath the object. Your whole hand is stronger than your fingers alone. Be sure hands or gloves and the surface of the object are not slippery. Keep your arms straight, allowing shoulder muscles to help lift the load.
 - Straighten your legs gradually from the squatting to an erect position. Jerking when you lift is as dangerous, as is setting down a load too quickly.

- Carry the load close to your body, as near as possible to your own center of balance. Keep your back erect. Loads should be carried in such a way as to permit an unobstructed view ahead.
- If you have to turn, do so with your whole frame, not just with your trunk. Avoid twisting your body, because this motion places the load outside your center of balance and puts intense strain on muscles not normally used in lifting. This also applies to gardening tasks involving shoveling or using a pitchfork.
- To set the load down, simply reverse the lifting operation. With your back erect, bend your legs at the knees to a squatting position and withdraw your hands from the object.
- When two or more people are lifting together, one person, and only one person, should give the directions for the team. Efforts should be completely coordinated. The load should be well balanced and, as much as possible, distributed evenly. For a team, the lifting procedure is the same as it is for just one person: squatting position, firm grip, erect body, lift with the legs, and reverse the procedure to set the load down. Follow the instructions of the more experienced handler.
- When raising an object to shoulder height or higher, first lift to about waist height, rest one end of the object on a bench or ledge, and then, if necessary, shift the position of the hands to accomplish the lift to the higher level. Reverse the process when lowering objects.
- Keep your chin up. If your chin is up, your back is likely to be straight and your ability to avoid back injury while lifting is greatly improved.

13. In case of emergency do the following:

- Call 911 immediately if:
 - a) The person is bleeding seriously or is unconscious.
 - b) The person is complaining of persistent chest pain with or without nausea and sweating.
 - c) The person has an allergic reaction that involves weakness, shortness of breath or difficulty swallowing.
 - d) The person has lost part of an appendage, such as a finger or hand. (Apply pressure to the wound and raise the remaining part of the limb above heart level to prevent further blood loss.) For a tooth, drop in milk to preserve, until the patient can get dental help. For an appendage, save the part, wrap in clean cloth (sterile if possible), and send with the ambulance.
- If the person stops breathing and has no pulse, call 911 and start rescue CPR/AED. At Arnold Park, the automatic external defibrillator (AED) is stored in a labeled cupboard at the top of the stairs leading down to the basement housekeeping office

in 7 Arnold Park. At Chapin Mill, the AED is stored in the altar service room, which is accessible both from the hallway outside the zendo and from the zendo itself. Use the AED even if you are not trained in its use; the equipment is clearly labeled with diagrams, and the AED itself will guide you with spoken instructions once the power button has been pressed. Even less-than-perfect CPR/AED use improves survival rates very significantly.

- For cuts and other non-emergency injuries, apply first aid if you have experience, or get someone who has. Current resource persons are John Pulleyn and Cecily Fuhr at Arnold Park and Eryl Kubicka at Chapin Mill. A first aid manual and supplies are in the closet next to the bathroom on the second floor of 5 Arnold Park. At Chapin Mill, emergency supplies are kept in the monitors' quarters.
- In case of electric shock, do not touch the person directly. Switch off the current at the source. Call 911 and start rescue CPR/AED if the victim is not breathing.
- In case of a serious allergic reaction, try to ascertain whether the victim has a known allergy and carries an antidote in the form of an EpiPen. If so, have the person use the EpiPen, or, after reading the instructions carefully, use the EpiPen on the person. The person should then be taken to a hospital emergency room.
- In case of drowning (for example in the Chapin Mill pond), start rescue breathing as soon as the victim is accessible.