Severe weather safety toolbox talk

29 CFR 1910.38, 1926.451, 1926.1417, 1926.651, 1926.21

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

If a storm rolled in during the next hour, do you know where you would go and who would tell you to stop?

Why it matters

Storms can build fast, and inclement weather changes every job on site. Lightning can strike before the rain arrives, wind can turn a sheet of plywood into a sail, and rain makes ladders, steel and mud slick. People get hurt when nobody knows who calls the stop or where to go. A plan everyone knows ahead of time takes the guessing out of a bad moment.

Key points

1. **Know the plan before the storm hits**
   Find out now how a weather warning will reach you, where the crew shelters, and who gives the all-clear. Where an emergency action plan is required, it must be reviewed with you when the plan is developed or you are first assigned. It must be reviewed again when your duties under it change and when the plan changes. Check the forecast before the shift, and have one person keep an eye on weather alerts during the day.
   29 CFR 1910.38(f)

2. **Lightning: get inside and stay there**
   If you can hear thunder, treat it as a warning that lightning is close enough to strike. Get off roofs, steel, scaffolds, equipment and open ground, and go into a fully enclosed building or a hard-topped vehicle with the windows up. Stay away from tall objects, metal and water while you move. Stay sheltered until the storm has clearly passed and the all-clear is given.

3. **High wind changes the job at height**
   Treat wind as high when it can push you off balance or make you lose control of what you are carrying. Work on or from scaffolds is prohibited during storms or high winds. The only exception is when a competent person has determined it is safe and the workers are protected by a personal fall arrest system or wind screens. Tie down or bring in loose sheets, panels and tarps before the wind picks up.
   29 CFR 1926.451(f)(12)

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4 Cranes need a weather call

Wind, ice and snow change how stable a crane is and how much it can safely lift. On crane work, the competent person must adjust the equipment, the operation or both to address the effect of wind, ice and snow on stability and rated capacity. If you are rigging or signaling and the wind is making the load hard to control, stop and tell the operator.

29 CFR 1926.1417(n)

5 Rain means slick, muddy and hard to see

Rain makes ladders, planks, steel and stairs slippery and makes it harder for drivers and operators to see. Slow down, wear boots with good tread, and keep cords and tools out of standing water. Excavations must be inspected by a competent person after every rainstorm when workers can reasonably be expected to be exposed, because water can weaken trench walls.

29 CFR 1926.651(k)(1)

6 Get to shelter and do a headcount

When the warning comes, stop work and go straight to the assigned shelter. An emergency action plan must include procedures to account for all employees after an evacuation, so check in with your foreman every time. If someone is missing, tell the person in charge right away instead of going back out to look on your own.

29 CFR 1910.38(c)(4)

Scenario

Picture this: A crew is setting roof trusses on a hot afternoon. Dark clouds are building to the west, and someone hears thunder, but the foreman wants to finish the last few trusses before the rain. The wind picks up and a truss starts to swing on the crane line. Nobody is sure who should call a stop or where everyone is supposed to go. What should have happened, and when?

Crew discussion

1. How do we get weather warnings on this job, and who is watching for them today?
2. Where is our shelter, and how would you get there from where you are working?
3. Which jobs on this site do we stop first when the wind picks up?
4. After a storm, what has to be checked before we go back to work?

Bottom line

Know the plan before the storm, stop and get to shelter at the first thunder or dangerous wind, and do not restart until the site has been checked.

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Severe weather / Clima severo

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

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