

Toolbox Talk

Working in Windy Conditions



What?

- Wind is the movement of air in our atmosphere. Air is forced to move by differences in atmospheric pressure. A greater difference in pressure causes stronger winds.
- Wind can't be seen, but it can certainly be heard and felt. It can also occur with little warning, creating unpredictable and deadly hazards for workers.

Why?

- Weather plays a huge role in our ability to work safely when working outdoors. While rain, snow, ice, and hot temperatures are often discussed, less focus is given to the hazards wind can create for workers. It is vital to realise the different hazards high winds can pose and what can be done to work safely in these conditions.
- The exact scope of work will determine what hazards high winds can create on a worksite. Some hazards created by high winds that are universal for many include **strains/ sprains** due to wind forcefully pulling doors from operators' hands, **struck-by incidents** due to objects being blown around, **slips, trips, falls** due to workers reacting to a falling hardhat or object due to wind blowing these items from them, **eye injuries** due to small particles of flying debris and dust, and **objects falling** from elevated surfaces.
- Preplanning of tasks is critical to ensure a solid start to working safely. Weather is a major factor in what tasks can or cannot be done on a particular day. When high winds are going to be present, plan work accordingly. Avoid certain tasks during high wind events as well as implement extra control measures to ensure safety during normal job tasks.

Do



- ✓ Eliminate work tasks altogether that become dangerous in excessively windy conditions.
- ✓ Factor in the effect of windy conditions to work tasks associated with lifting and moving materials.
- ✓ Park vehicles and equipment where the wind is blowing against the opposite side that the operator exits and enters.
- ✓ Exercise caution when opening building and vehicle doors, to ensure they do not strike you or others.
- ✓ Get assistance carrying materials that could be caught and sent airborne by the wind or wait until the wind has reduced.
- ✓ Wear suitable eye protection (glasses, goggles) to prevent dust and debris from blowing into your eyes.

Don't



- ✗ Stand below or next to an unstable wall, stack of materials or anything that could blow over onto you.
- ✗ Stand between the edge of an elevated surface and an object being carried.
- ✗ Attempt to carry out work at height or lifting activities during high winds.
- ✗ Leave loose objects or items at height or ground level, such as sheeting, plywood, or tooling without being removed or tied down.
- ✗ Try to manoeuvre heavy or bulky items by yourself, especially if it's windy.
- ✗ Reach or react to dropping an object to the wind, especially on an elevated surface.
- ✗ Use ladders, scaffolds, or steps in windy conditions if you have any doubts about stability.