H S E

HEALTH SAFETY ENVIRONMENTAL

SAFETY ALERT

Alert #: SA 16-21 **Date:** 9/8/21

Hurricane Cleanup and Debris Safety

As we continue cleanup efforts due to Hurricane Ida, we must stay focused on hazard identification processes. Below are a few areas of concern that should help with jogging your memory.

Contact with downed lines and life electrical equipment

- Assume that electrical lines are energized until proven otherwise. Lines and other conductors may become re-energized without warning as utilities are evaluated and restored after a disaster
- Inspect the work area for downed conductors and do not go near, drive over, or otherwise come in contact with them
- Downed electrical conductors can energize other objects, including fences, water pipes, bushes, trees, and telephone/CATV/fiber optic cables
- Unless deenergized and visibly grounded, maintain proper distance from overhead electrical power lines (at least 10 feet) and/or provide insulating barriers.

Power & Hand Tool Use

- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) or double insulated power tools, or implement an assured equipment grounding program
- Inspect power tool condition (including any cords) and verify operation of safety features before use
- Do not use equipment that is defective, such as equipment with inoperable safety switches, missing guards, frayed/cut cords etc.
- Ground power tools properly
- Avoid standing in wet areas when using portable power tools
- Additional Personal Protective Equipment
    - Hearing protection
    - Hand protection for cut- and abrasion-control and vibration dampening
    - Eye protection appropriate to the impact hazard

Hazard from nails and flying objects

- Beware of nails on the ground. We have already had a few incidents where personnel has stepped on them.
- For pneumatic nailers, assure that the safety device on the muzzle is operational.
- Utilize eye protection appropriate to the impact hazard.

Noise

- Place generators, compressors, and other noisy equipment at a distance or behind a barrier when possible
- Hearing protection when working around potential noise sources and when noise levels exceed 90 dBA. A useful "rule of thumb"-if you cannot hold a conversation in a normal speaking voice with a person who is standing at arms length (approximately 3 feet), the noise level may exceed 90 dBA and hearing protection should be worn.

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Slips, Trips & Falls on Working Surfaces

- Establish travel paths or walkways through work areas. Keep them clear to minimize trip hazards. Remove dropped objects from pathways immediately.
- Ensure that additional equipment brought to the location does not create or pose additional slip, trip, and fall hazards.
- Keep electric cords and cables and pneumatic lines out of travel paths and walkways. If this is not feasible, protect the cord to avoid creating trip hazards and to prevent damage to the cords, cables, and lines.
- Establish barriers and/or mark areas around known hazards such as holes and overhead hazards.
- Take extra care when stepping onto unstable or uneven surfaces, and onto surfaces where the hazard cannot be seen (e.g., underwater surfaces).
- Clean up spilled material as soon as practical to avoid creating a slip hazard.
- Install steps and ramps and properly maintain them. Include slip-resistant treads and smooth handrails that will not cause punctures or lacerations.
- Provide sufficient lighting to safely illuminate work areas.

Manual Material Handling

- Use safe lifting practices; keep the weight as close to you as possible; and involve extra people or mechanical devices (e.g. Dollies or hoists) as needed.
- Take frequent rest breaks when lifting heavy or water-laden objects.
- For tarps, make sure that the tarp roll is secure before lifting it up onto the roof; consider using more than one person or lifting equipment to lift tarp to the roof, if necessary
- Take care when unrolling the tarp onto the roof surface

Chemical & Material Storage & Use

- Segregate and store incompatible chemicals separately. For example, store solvents and oxidizers (e.g., peroxides) separately, and acids and caustics separately
- Secure compressed gas cylinders and ensure that they are stored properly when not in use (regulators off and valve caps on when not in use; separate oxygen and fuel gas by 20 feet or using a non-combustible barrier (5 ft high, fire-resistant rating of at least ½ hour))
- Store chemicals in containers approved and designed for chemical storage and mark all storage locations
- Store and handle hazardous materials in areas with natural or forced ventilation; do not store or handle in low-lying areas
- Isolate, secure and identify storage areas
- Prohibit smoking near storage areas
- Keep ignition sources at least 25 feet away from storage areas
- Ensure that fire extinguishers and extinguishing agents are available in the immediate area
- Bond and ground containers before dispensing flammable liquids.
- Gloves made of material that will protect user from chemicals handled
- Face shield or goggles with indirect venting. If a face shield is selected, eye protection must be worn under the face shield
- A respirator and cartridges specific for chemical, as necessary
- Discovery of unknown chemicals
    - If hazardous chemical containers are found or leaking materials are detected:
    - Do not use spark-producing devices (e.g., engines, tools, electronic, and communications equipment) in the immediate area
    - Take self-protective measures (i.e., move to a safe distance upwind) and contact hazardous material response personnel for evaluation/removal before continuing work in the area

Report all incidents immediately to the GIS Hotline 1-855-543-5163.