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Signs, Signals, and Barricades Training

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Comments:

I have noticed a couple trends on sites lately. Trades are putting up red danger tape with incomplete or no contact info. Or using red tape where yellow tape would suffice. I have also noticed that equipment operators are lax in acknowledging foot traffic. Last week at KCASI the basement was 'red taped' off in a manner that left no egress from the basement but via the elevator.

I report these situations as I see them to the appropriate person on site. I know HBI is committed to my safety. Helpful, diligent and responsive. I haven't felt the same way about trade partners on site lately. Letting safety get lax as projects near completion is the perfect recipe for violations or possible injuries. So I have increased my commitment to reporting concerns directly to the GC. I'm also even more diligent about coordinating directly with GC safety teams directly. If we see something AND say something. We are helping refresh the eyes of others to be diligent, focused and on task when it comes to safety.

Construction sites are full of moving parts : equipment, vehicles, lifts, and crews all working together. Signs, signals, and barricades are some of our first lines of defense in keeping everyone safe. They guide us where to go, what to avoid, and how to stay alert. Today we will focus on how to properly use these controls : especially when setting up **Controlled Access Zones (CAZs)** and when working with spotters for **Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs)**.

Signs, Signals, and Barricades: What They Mean

Signs communicate warnings, directions, or hazards. Examples: :Confined Space, :No Entry, or :Fall Hazard.:

Signals are hand or verbal communications between workers and operators : like a spotter guiding a forklift or boom lift. Always use standard, agreed-upon hand signals.

Barricades are physical barriers : cones, caution tape, chains, or fencing : used to block off hazardous areas or keep unauthorized personnel out.

These three work together to **control access and reduce risk**.

Red and Yellow Tape or Rope: What They Mean

Color matters : and understanding it can prevent serious injuries.

Red :Danger: Tape or Rope:

This means **:Do Not Enter.:** The area behind red tape is **off-limits** to everyone except those specifically authorized to work inside. These areas typically involve serious hazards such as overhead work, fall exposures, or energized equipment.

Never step over, duck under, or remove red tape or rope without permission.

If your work requires access, you must contact the competent person or supervisor before entering.

Yellow :Caution: Tape or Rope:

This means **:Proceed with Caution.:** The area may have minor or controlled hazards, such as uneven surfaces or material staging.

Always stop and **visually assess** the area before crossing.

Make sure you know **what hazard is present** and whether it's safe to enter.

If you're unsure, ask the competent person or foreman before moving forward.

These color-coded warnings exist to protect you : not slow you down. Respect them every time.

Controlled Access Zones (CAZ)

A **Controlled Access Zone** is a designated area where certain high-risk work takes place : such as overhead lifts, falling object zones, or tasks near unprotected edges.

Key points to remember:

Only authorized and trained workers are allowed inside the CAZ.

The area must be clearly marked with **signs and barricades** to keep others out.

Never enter a CAZ unless you've been given clearance by the competent person or supervisor.

Keep CAZ markings in good condition : if tape or cones are knocked down, replace them immediately.

CAZs protect everyone : not just those performing the task.

Spotters for Lifts

When operating **aerial lifts, scissor lifts, or forklifts**, spotters are essential for preventing struck-by incidents and property damage.

Spotter Responsibilities:

Maintain **constant visual contact** with the operator.

Stand in a safe position : never between the lift and a fixed object.

Use **clear hand signals or radios** to communicate.

Watch for **overhead hazards, pedestrians, and obstacles**.

Stop the operation immediately if conditions become unsafe.

Operator Responsibilities:

Only move the lift when signals are clear and understood.

Never assume the path is clear : always confirm with your spotter.

Slow down in tight areas or when visibility is limited.

According to OSHA, one of the leading causes of struck-by and caught-between incidents on construction sites involves equipment movement and lack of proper barriers. A few seconds to check signs, set barricades, or confirm with your spotter can prevent serious injury.

Key Takeaways

Respect all **signs, signals, and barricades** : they're there for a reason.

Never cross **red danger tape** without authorization.

Use caution and confirm safety before crossing **yellow caution tape**.

Set up and maintain **Controlled Access Zones** for hazardous work.

Always use a **spotter** when operating or moving lifts in tight or busy areas.

Clear communication saves lives.

Remember This!

Safety isn't about luck : it's about awareness and teamwork. Whether you're setting a barricade or acting as a spotter, your actions help make sure everyone goes home safe.