

THE DROP **STOPS** **HERE**

DROPPED OBJECTS AWARENESS

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – ESTABLISHING AND RESPECTING NO-GO AREAS



THE DROP ZONE

Anytime work is performed at height, a drop zone exists below. This is an area where tools, materials, or debris could fall and injure workers. A clearly marked and controlled drop zone prevents workers from entering harm's way and reduces the chance of serious injuries.

KEY MESSAGE

A safe drop zone protects both the workers above and the workers below.

TIPS FOR ESTABLISHING SAFE DROP ZONE AREAS

- Create a drop zone for every overhead job
- Clearly mark and control access to drop zone areas
- Set up a proper drop zone
- Have a spotter in place
- Have good communication between workers above and below

EVERY OVERHEAD JOB CREATES A DROP ZONE

- If someone is working above, you—or if materials are stored at height—there is a risk. Drop zones must be recognized and set up before work begins.

DROP ZONES MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED AND ACCESS CONTROLLED

- Use physical barriers such as cones, tape, railings, barricades, and warning signage
- Ensure no one enters a drop zone without authorization - only workers directly involved in the overhead task should enter the area. Spotters, riggers, and supervisors must maintain control of who enters and when. Unauthorized entry into a drop zone is a serious hazard.

SETTING UP A PROPER DROP ZONE

- A good drop zone includes:
- Clear markings visible from all directions
- Cones or barricades placed wide enough to account for deflection or bounce
- Overhead work signage
- Consider wind, height, tools, and material size
- Bigger or heavier objects require larger drop zones.

SPOTTER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain continuous awareness of the overhead work
- Keep workers from entering the area
- Communicate changes in work scope or hazards
- Call “Clear!” only when safe to lift, lower, or move materials
- Spotters play a critical role in keeping the zone secure

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN WORKERS ABOVE AND BELOW

- Workers above must announce when work is starting or changing
- Workers below must respect instructions and stay outside barricades
- Radios or hand signals should be used for clarity
- Everyone must pause work if the zone becomes compromised
- Clear communication prevents confusion—and injuries.

ACTIVITY

Identify today’s drop zones and verify they are properly barricaded. Checklist:

- Are barricades set up?
- Are signs visible from all access points?
- Has the drop zone been sized appropriately for the work?
- Are workers aware of who is authorized to enter?
- Is there a designated spotter?

KEY TAKEAWAY

Drop zones save lives. If someone is working above you, respect the boundary. If you are working above others, secure the area before you start.

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