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## **Pressure Washing Safety**

You may be surprised to learn that every year, thousands of people go to the ER for injuries related to pressure washer use.

The force at which the water comes out of a pressure washer is very strong. In fact, some may not realize how strong it is until it has already caused damage to their property or themselves. In this tailgate meeting, we will cover hazards and injuries to look out for when using a pressure washer, as well as our best practices for staying safe.

### **Pressure Washing Hazards & Injuries:**

There are many different types of hazards and injuries that can occur while using a pressure washer.

Some of the most common are:

- Burns
- Slips, Trips & Falls
- Lacerations
- Bruises
- Hose failures
- Hose connection failures
- Flying debris
- Sprains
- Strains
- Loss of digits

### **Pressure Washing Safety Best Practices:**

There are many different uses for pressure washers on a construction site. Despite the benefits, pressure washers can cause serious damage and personal injury if not operated safely.

When using a pressure washer, make sure you follow these safety precautions:

### **Wear Appropriate PPE:**

Just about all jobs that are done on a construction site have PPE that is designed to keep workers safe when operating different machinery. What you are cleaning and what pressure you are using to clean it will dictate exactly what PPE is necessary.

However, at the least you should wear:

- Safety toe boots
- Rain jacket and gear
- Safety glasses
- Gloves
- Face shield

### **Never Use a Pressure Washer on Yourself or Anyone Else:**

A pressure washer should never be used to clean off people or their clothing items. The pressure that is put out by these machines is very powerful and can injure you easily.

Pressure washer wounds often appear benign at first, but these injuries can result in serious injuries like infection, disability, and amputation.

### **Isolate Your Work Area:**

When setting up your work area, make sure others are not in the line of fire of the spray of the hose and any debris that may fly with it.

### **Never Use Zero Tips:**

Zero tips, often marked red, have a very narrow spray, and come out with more force than other tips. Because of that, they tend to cause the most damage if the stream contacts the body.

Choosing a tip with a wider angle of spray reduces the chance of a severe injury.

### **Stay Tidy:**

When working in any situation, practicing good housekeeping is the key to safety.

Pressure washing is no different.

To prevent slip, trip, and fall injuries for yourself and others, be sure to keep the area free of hazards and remove excess mud. Also make sure the hose and equipment stay out of any direct walking paths.