



**Jim Persons**  
**jimpersons@safetypride.com**  
**707-889-0881**

## **High Wind Dangers**

When you are working outside sometimes you are at the mercy of the weather. Rain, snow, ice, and heat all can play a huge role in the ability to work outside but a less talked about hazard is high winds.

It is important to also realize that high winds can pose a threat and are a safety hazard and what to do if you find yourself working in these conditions.

### **What are Considered High Winds?**

High wind is a wind of such velocity that one or more of the following hazards would be present:

The wind could blow on an employee from an elevated location.

The wind could cause an employee or equipment handling material to lose control of the material.

The wind would expose an employee to other hazards not controlled by the standard involved.

OSHA (The Occupational Safety and Health Administration) normally considers winds that are exceeding 40 miles per hour as high winds.

If the work involves material handling, high winds can be considered at 30 miles per hour, unless the employer takes precautions to protect employees from the hazards of the wind.

### **High Wind Hazards:**

Every construction job site is different so not every site will have the same hazards that can be created by high winds.

Some high wind hazards include but are not limited to:

Strains and sprains due to wind forcefully pulling doors from the operator's hands.

Struck-by incidents due to objects being blown around.

Slips, falls, and trips due to workers reacting to a falling hardhat or object due to the wind blowing these items over

Eye injuries due to small particles of flying debris and dust

Dropped loads while completing lifts with wind present.

Objects falling from elevated surfaces.

Dump truck tip-over

Unplanned movement of overhead power lines

If you see some hazards on your jobsite, you should always alert your coworkers as well as your supervisor. If you are unsure of something being a hazard it is always better to speak up.

### **How to Prepare for High Winds:**

In order to keep yourself and other workers safe on a construction job site there are several things you can do to prepare:

Check weather reports and monitor conditions continuously.

Do not schedule work at elevations on days when high winds are in the forecast.

Wind can pick up quickly and sudden gusts can take you by surprise. Make sure you always wear a harness when working at heights and ensure you are connected to an anchor point at all times.

Ensure partially built structures are properly secured and supported at all times regardless of weather conditions and that walls are braced until the building is complete.

Ensure scaffolding and other temporary structures are secure and cannot be blown over.

### **How to Stay Safe During High Winds:**

Should you find yourself working in high winds there are a few safety tips you should follow. If you have any questions about any of these, you should always ask your supervisor for clarification.

Some safety tips to remember during high winds include:

Never work on scaffoldings, roofs, or other elevations during strong winds.

Ensure that tools are packed away safely, and that roofing sheets, cones, signage, and other loose materials are safely secured. A high wind can pick up a piece of scrap metal and carry it as far out as the height from which it came!

Wear eye protection to keep dust, debris, and other foreign particles from blowing into the eyes.

Ensure hard hats are securely fastened and cannot be blown off your head.

Use extreme caution when picking up large sheets of plywood or similar flat materials that can fly through the air.

Tag lines should be used when hoisting loads with large flat surfaces.

Do not operate hoisting equipment in high winds without approval from your supervisor.

Cease all crane operations until wind speeds return to acceptable levels.

Working during high winds can be extremely difficult and the potential for injuries is high.

Always use extreme caution and if you feel like the winds are too high to continue, bring it to your supervisor's attention.

You should never put yourself or your fellow coworkers at risk on purpose.