OCTOBER 2023

ED 3. VOL 8

CONTROLLING YOUR

# JOBSITE

## IN THIS ISSUE



## HOW CAN YOU MINIMIZE RISK AND KEEP IT SAFE?

The average general contractor (GC) likely has an office/warehouse where they do their paperwork, plan their projects, manage their inventory, and run their business. It is the base of operations from where they send their crews out into the world. It is generally a location that is static. What we mean by that is that the risks you face at your home base stay relatively consistent. You do your best to prevent slips and falls, develop an inventory system, and get appropriate coverage for your facilities, and not much about that picture will change over time. The reality though, is that most of a GC's work (and a good portion of their risk) isn't associated with your home base but can be found at your crews' home away from home: the jobsite. Each jobsite is unique, both in the risks it presents, and the work that needs to be done. A key component of risk management for any GC is to ensure that protocols are in place to ensure each jobsite is as safe as possible. What does that look like? Let's break it down.

## JOBSITE SECURITY

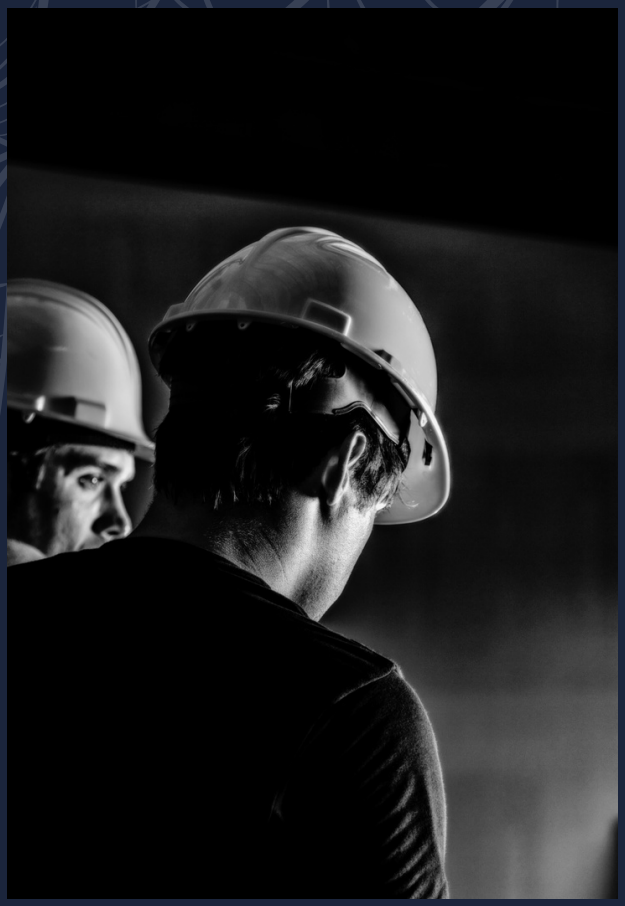
Before we dive into some of the more common risks on the jobsite, we must touch on something that may be even more important — keeping the jobsite secure. Security is essential for GC's who want to run successful operations. When your crew arrives for work in the morning, they expect heavy machinery to be where they left it and that none of their progress has been destroyed. This risk is not minimal. Jobsite theft and vandalism costs construction companies in the U.S. over $1 billion every year. [1] Stolen and broken machines and equipment come with replacement costs, as do expensive materials. A secondary, but equally impactful loss is time. Replacing materials and equipment or re-doing work due to vandalism will put you behind

aia ASSOCIATES INSURANCE AGENCY

schedule, or even stop a job in its tracks. Loss of reputation and future work could follow as you try to explain the stoppages to clients. Finally, your jobsite should be secure to prevent anyone from wandering into a dangerous situation. Curious onlookers, or even representatives of the client could put themselves in harm's way if you don't ensure your jobsite is secure. Here are the basics you should put in place at every job you take on.

## ANALYZE AHEAD OF TIME

Planning for security should happen before the job begins. Analyze the job, and the site in order to assess the steps you should take. Is it a controversial job? Noise levels, historical landmarks, messing with peoples commute — factors like this could incite people to take exception to your work. What is the neighborhood of the job like? Analyze crime patterns and if necessary, discuss with local authorities. Are there particularly vulnerable places on the job site? Look for areas that are easy to access or hard to see and ensure you have adequate security measures planned. The more prepared you are, the better.



## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Thieves prefer to work in the dark. Make sure that you take steps to adequately light your jobsite with bright light that makes faces easy to identify and license plates easy to read.

**ONE EXTRA TIP IS TO PROTECT YOUR POWER SOURCE. KEEP POWER LINES AND GENERATORS HARD TO ACCESS SO A PAIR OF WIRE CUTTERS CAN'T CRIPPLE YOUR DEFENSES.**

Second, make sure to invest in security cameras. Your planning can help you identify potential entry points and weaknesses that you will need to monitor.

## INSTALL A FENCE, AND KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

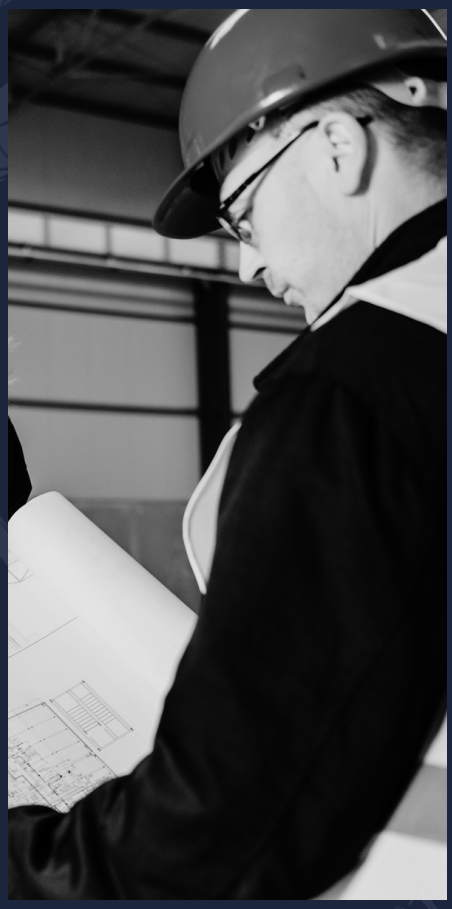
One of the most basic components you should have in place to keep your sites secure is perimeter fencing. Follow this checklist: Height, Clearance, and Entry Points. Keep the fence high enough to make it harder to jump or climb. Keep the area around the fence clear of obstructions or equipment that could make it easier for someone to climb. Limit your entry points so that they are easier to secure and keep track of. Once your perimeter is secure, make sure you keep track of who is inside. Subcontractors and your crew may mingle, and it could be harder than you think to know everyone and their role. Consider implementing a checklist of questions: Who do you work for here, what do you do for my sub-contractor, when did you arrive on the job site, etc. The goal is to ask questions that can help your team identify anyone who may not belong.

# SAFETY IS MORE THAN A POSTER

With your jobsite on its way to becoming more secure, it is time to turn your attention to the 4-letter s-word. Of course, we are talking about "safe". Many work environments have to deal with the safety of their employees. But instead of spilling toner or stubbing a toe on office furniture, the hazards on a jobsite can lead to serious injuries. The numbers, unfortunately, tell that story.

**IN THE U.S., 1 IN EVERY FIVE JOBSITE DEATHS IS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, DESPITE ONLY BEING 6 PERCENT OF THE WORKFORCE.**

[2] When looking at non-fatal injuries, construction companies have injury rates 71% higher than the all-industry average, and the total annual cost of these injuries eclipsed $11.5 billion. [3] The safety of the jobsite should be a primary concern of any GC who wants to remain profitable but stop for a second and go beyond the numbers. Your crews and their families are counting on your leadership to ensure they get home safely every day. So how can you take that safety culture and bring it to the jobsite?



# PREDICTIVE DATA CAPTURE

Workers' comp insurance is good, but inherently it is a reaction to an incident that has already occurred. The goal is to predict incidents before they happen. That way, you can reduce either the frequency at which they would occur, their severity, or both.

**EVERY COMPANY WITH MORE THAN 10 EMPLOYEES IS REQUIRED BY LAW TO TRACK HEALTH AND JOBSITE SAFETY DATA, AND RESEARCH SHOWS THAT DATA ANALYTICS CAN TAKE THAT DATA AND FORECAST FUTURE INCIDENTS AND CREATE EFFECTIVE ACCIDENT PREVENTION.**

[4] What data should you be tracking? Current site conditions and historical data, from the weather conditions to previous accident reports. The point is that the data you will need is unique to your company, and the work you do. You will need to create a system for gathering and assessing that data, protocols to inspect existing work and report near misses, and standards for measuring that data.

## TRAIN YOUR TEAM

Your team is a major component of your culture. Our belief when it comes to training on safety is that safety starts from the top down. You need to develop and deploy leaders across your organization. They can act as leaders as you conduct the necessary training for every member of your team.

Every job site is unique, and you will need to train on on-site risk assessment. The specifics will be dependent on the job, but you can focus on key metrics that you want to improve on over time and use them to target your training. Instruction could range from how to operate heavy equipment like excavators or jackhammers, how to respond in a crisis situation and more.

Many organizations have some kind of safety program in place, and yet the construction industry suffers. Rethink your training and use the data you collect from around your organization to create a custom plan to mitigate your risk or partner with our agency's safety department to help you to develop one. And make sure that training stays fresh. Having a culture focused on safety means that it is always at the forefront of your mind. From on-going training to programs that keep your team accountable, make sure that you are dedicated to making safety a priority long-term.

# EQUIP YOUR TEAM

Training is only one piece of the puzzle. If your crew knows how to utilize a jackhammer without injuring their back but aren't wearing eye protection to avoid the concrete it spits up, there will still be injuries.

**A SAFE JOB SITE IS ONE WHERE A CREW IS PROPERLY EQUIPPED WITH THE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) THEY NEED TO STAY SAFE. INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:**

- **HARD HATS**
- **GLOVES**
- **EYE PROTECTION**
- **HEARING PROTECTION**
- **PROTECTIVE FOOTWEAR**
- **BRIGHT COLORED CLOTHING**

Your team needs the gear that will keep them safe. Any GC should plan proactively when approaching a job. There are basics that a crew will always need but a jobsite may have unique requirements like welding gear or protection against toxic materials such as respirators.

You will also need to make sure to regularly inspect both your PPE inventory and refresh your team on proper usage. Habits slip over time, make a proactive effort to reinforce behavior that will keep your team safe.

## START GETTING SAFER TODAY

For the average GC, so much of their work happens on the jobsite. Creating a safer and more secure jobsite will be an important foundation for success. It will help cut down on losses due to theft, vandalism, and insurance claims. It will create a safe environment for your most valuable asset: your team. It could even become an asset that will help you grow, attract clients, and survive in an industry with high competition and slim margins. If you have any questions about jobsite safety, feel free to reach out to our agency to discuss this further.

### REFERENCES


1. Chinn, S. 8 Construction Risks Facing the Construction Industry and How to Reduce. eSUB Construction Software. 2020. https://esub.com/blog/8-construction-risks-facing-the-construction-industry-and-how-to-reduce/
2. OSHA. (2019). United States Department of Labor Statistics. Commonly Used Statistics | Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Retrieved September 28, 2021, from https://www.osha.gov/data/commonstats.
3. Waehrer, G. M., Dong, X. S., Miller, T., Haile, E., & Men, Y. (2007). Costs of occupational injuries in construction in the United States. Accident; analysis and prevention, 39(6), 1258–1266. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2007.03.012
4. Mills, Thomas & Turner, Michelle & Pettinger, Chuck. (2017). Advancing predictive indicators to prevent construction accidents.
5. https://ledgestone.medium.com/the-general-contractors-home-away-from-home-the-jobsite-2fed8fcd5a61