



Habitat ReStore safety guide

operational safety

2019

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Overview

The Habitat ReStore Safety Guide

The guidance outlined in this document applies to all U.S. Habitat affiliate retail operations, regardless of branding or date of inception. The majority of the following guidelines relate to Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Department of Transportation requirements. These guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive of all federal, state and local regulations.

Affiliates must also consider state and city regulations, and should contact their local governance or regulatory agencies to discuss location-specific requirements.

Compliance with existing OSHA regulations should be a top priority for every affiliate and store leader. Not only is this required by law, but compliance with safety regulations also will create a safer environment for shoppers, donors, staff members and volunteers.

Habitat ReStore management and leadership

This guide often uses terms such as “affiliate and store management” alongside more general terms such as “ReStore leaders.” Habitat ReStore management positions and affiliate job titles are among the many differences in the affiliate community.

Management duties and delegation of authority are often inconsistently assigned and implemented among affiliate staff members in the U.S. affiliate community. This guide does not assume who in the affiliate is delegated to perform the management of Habitat ReStore safety.

Habitat ReStore governance and compliance

It is the responsibility of affiliate and store management to create a safe and a regulatory-compliant environment for all staff members, volunteers, shoppers and donors. The affiliate management team may decide to delegate these responsibilities in various ways, but the ultimate obligation for compliance lies with the affiliate’s board of directors and executive director. An affiliate that is out of compliance with legally mandated safety regulations related to its Habitat ReStore might consider a brief closure in order to resolve the safety issues rather than operate an unsafe retail establishment that puts safety and security — and Habitat’s reputation — at risk.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.151](#).
- Resources to identify and deliver training requirements.
- Guidance on [first-aid supplies](#) and [access to medical care](#).
- [Eye wash stations](#).
- Resources to identify and address [heat](#) and [cold](#) stress.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's related requirements on medical services and first aid](#).
- ☐ Create first-aid action steps.
- ☐ Establish a checklist for safety supplies.
- ☐ Create guidelines for heat and cold stress.
- ☐ Provide first-aid **training** to staff.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

I. PERSONAL SAFETY FOR STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Medical and first aid

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Safety precautions are in place to protect our shoppers, donors, staff members and volunteers, but incidents can still happen. Prevention and preparedness are key. This chapter will inform affiliate and store leaders about first-aid training resources, maintaining a first-aid checklist, and preventing heat and cold stress.

OSHA REQUIREMENTS

To ensure compliance with applicable OSHA laws, a store that is not **near** a hospital or clinic (**within a three- to four-minute drive**) must have one or more staff members trained in administering first aid, and supplies must be readily available ([OSHA 1910.151\(b\)](#)). Additionally, any facility with corrosive materials housed at the location, or with a battery charging station for forklifts, must have not only proper protective equipment available, but also eye wash stations or a shower and supplies available for flushing the eyes and cleansing the body in an emergency situation ([OSHA 1910.151\(c\)](#)).

FIRST-AID ACTION STEPS

Documented action plan

In the event of an incident, all stores should have a documented process for staff members and volunteers to follow. Action steps should include, but are not limited to:

- Location and guidelines for use of first-aid kits.
- Location and guidelines for use of eye wash stations and/or shower facilities.
- Whom to contact when an incident occurs.
- Locations and phone numbers for nearby medical facilities.
- Incident report forms (or information on their location). *A Lockton Affinity incident report template can be found online [here](#).*

Lockton's recommended procedures for injuries to shoppers, donors, staff members and volunteers can be found [here](#).

Training

- The affiliate should consider having all staff members trained in basic first-aid skills, since dozens, if not hundreds, of shoppers, donors and volunteers visit Habitat stores on a regular basis.
- Because of the potential for working with large, heavy and/or potentially dangerous materials, being prepared for an event that causes injury or harm can help minimize the risk and protect those who visit the Habitat ReStore.
- To identify training resources, consider contacting the local [Red Cross](#). First-aid training courses from the Red Cross are available [here](#), and CPR training courses are found [here](#).

Incident reports

- Lockton incident reports should be completed and reported within 24 to 48 hours of the incident and retained anytime first aid is administered or hospitalization occurs. These reports create a factual record that is critical for any insurance claim, and they also can provide an alert if there are patterns of injury types or injury-causing materials.
- Affiliate and store management also should be familiar with [OSHA reporting requirements](#) for specific incidents.
- In addition to incident tracking, “[near misses](#)” should be logged internally but do not have to be reported externally. OSHA defines this as an incident in which no property was damaged and/or no personal injury was suffered, but given a slight shift in time or position, damage or injury could have occurred. Keeping track of these situations can alert management to take additional precautions and preventive measures.

SUPPLY CHECKLIST

A first-aid kit with basic supplies must be readily available in all facilities ([OSHA 1910.151](#)). Each store should assess the items to be regularly stocked based on the materials that are handled on site and the needs of the staff and volunteers. OSHA does not define what is required to be in on-site kits, but the American National Standards Institute, or [ANSI](#), recommends the following for small work sites:

Basic kit – minimum contents	Minimum quantity
Absorbent compress: 32 square inches (81.3 square centimeters) with no side smaller than 4 inches (10 cm)	1
Adhesive bandages: 1 x 3 in. (2.5 x 7.5 cm)	16
Adhesive tape: 5 yards (457.2 cm) total	1
Antiseptic: 0.5 gram (0.14 fluid ounce) applications	10
Burn treatment: 0.5 g (0.14 fl. oz.) applications	6
Medical exam gloves	2 pairs
Sterile pads: 3 x 3 in. (7.5 x 7.5 cm)	4
Triangular bandage: 40 x 40 x 56 in. (101 x 101 x 142 cm)	1

Habitat ReStores with a higher number of staff members and volunteers (five to 25 people) should consider increasing the quantities recommended above, and all ReStore leaders should establish a system or timeline for restocking items that have been used or have expired.

HEAT AND COLD STRESS

[Heat illness](#) is a serious medical condition, and staff members and volunteers can be susceptible in a variety of activities and environments. OSHA provides a number of resources for understanding, preventing and treating heat-related illnesses [here](#). Basic guidance includes:

- There should be an adequate supply of clean, cool, potable water available to staff members and volunteers at all times.
- Staff members and volunteers who are working in the heat should be encouraged to stay hydrated by drinking water at frequent intervals to replace the water lost to sweat.
- Staff members and volunteers should be trained to immediately alert their supervisor or manager of any heat illness symptoms they may be experiencing.
- Staff members and volunteers also should watch for heat illness symptoms in others who may not recognize the need for water and a cooling break.

- Prompt action is necessary to ensure that the condition does not escalate, and additional medical attention should be sought as necessary.

The following tips can help prevent heat illness and protect workers:

- An adequate supply of fresh potable water must be available for every staff member and volunteer, including those working off-site (such as drivers and driving assistants).
- Keep indoor temperatures between 68 and 76 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Encourage frequent short breaks and adequate consumption of water throughout the day.
- Shade must be made available at all times and for heat illness recovery periods. Additional relief, such as a water mister and fans, also may be used.
- Monitor the condition of staff members and volunteers during extremely hot weather and heavy work periods. Staff members and volunteers should be allowed an opportunity to acclimatize to hot weather.
- Provide reminders of heat-related procedures and safety measures regularly, particularly on days in which staff members and volunteers are likely to be exposed to heat.
- When working hours cannot be modified in times of extreme heat, additional rest periods, shade and water breaks should be provided.
- Ensure that all staff members and volunteers understand how and to whom to report heat illness symptoms. Staff members should be empowered to call 911 immediately when it appears that an individual needs medical attention.
- Prompt action must be taken when a staff member or volunteer exhibits or reports symptoms consistent with possible heat illness.
- Staff members and volunteers who exhibit heat illness symptoms should be removed from the environment, helped to cool off quickly, and given plenty of water until medical professionals can be contacted.

Some common early symptoms and signs of heat illness (Heat Exposure):

- Headaches
- Muscle cramps
- Unusual fatigue

The presence of any of the above symptoms requires immediate attention. If not caught early, it can lead to more serious signs, such as:

- Nausea/vomiting
- Weakness
- Rapid pulse
- Excessive sweating
- Dry skin
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

There is no temperature below which work in heat is not a risk. With heavy work at high relative humidity, or if staff members and volunteers are wearing protective clothing, even work at 70°F can present a risk. In some regions of the U.S., special actions need to be taken to reduce heat illness risk when temperatures approach 80°F. At temperatures above 90°F, especially with heavy work, heat risk reduction should be a major concern. If your facility is nonconditioned (i.e., it does not have air conditioning), there may be periods of heat during which the affiliate should close the store rather than subject staff members and volunteers to a potentially dangerous environment.

Cold environments also can present a health risk. Staff members and volunteers should be instructed to do the following if they are working outside in cold environments:

- Wear layered clothing.
 - The first layer should be thin and help to keep moisture away from the body. Polypropylene is an effective choice.

- Wool is frequently chosen as a second layer because it stays warm even if it gets wet (cotton tends to absorb water, making it less effective).
- Keep clothing loose so it does not compress under layers and keeps the layers of warm air intact. Ensure the outer clothing layer is wind- and waterproof.
- Staff members and volunteers should be instructed to pace themselves if they have physically demanding work to do. Fatigue can contribute to hypothermia.
- Hands and feet must be protected.
- Keep skin dry. To stay dry, reduce perspiration by removing layers or loosening clothing at the neck, wrists and waist.
- Wear warm headgear.
- Take breaks in a heated environment, and increase the frequency of breaks when the cold or wind is more intense. Be sure outer layers are removed in warmer environments.
- Drink plenty of warm fluids. Good hydration helps circulation. Caffeinated beverages are not ideal because they cause more blood flow to the surface of the skin. This can expose the blood to excessive cold and result in a decrease in core body temperature.
- If the facility is not heated, there may be periods of extreme cold during which the affiliate should close the store rather than subject staff members and volunteers to a potentially dangerous environment.

HABITAT RESTORE VEHICLES

Individuals performing donation pickup services are frequently the most susceptible to heat and cold stress. During periods of extreme temperatures, consider one or more of these options to maintain safety:

- Reduce the number of pickups scheduled in a day, and provide more time for breaks.
- Perform pickups in shifts — the first team completes the morning pickups and returns the truck to the store, then a new team completes the afternoon pickups — to reduce exposure time for each staff member.
- Outsource a portion of your pickups to a third-party moving service in order to reduce the amount of time that staff members and volunteers are exposed to the elements while maintaining the total number of pickups completed in the day.
- Volunteers should neither be expected nor required to work in extreme temperatures.

The most impactful way to minimize risks for heat or cold stress is to have a fully temperature-controlled store to ensure the comfort and safety of shoppers, donors, volunteers and staff members.

TRAINING STAFF MEMBERS

Every staff member should be aware of the location of first-aid kits, eye wash stations and showers, and should know what steps to take when there is an incident on-site. The Red Cross provides training courses on CPR, first aid and the use of automatic external defibrillators, or AEDs. [Find a Red Cross training at this link](#). All staff members should understand how preparedness and formalized training can increase their awareness and confidence in handling on-site incidents.

VOLUNTEERS

Habitat ReStore volunteers should be aware of the available training and resources for personal and medical safety, but they are not obligated to manage safety regulations or compliance. Volunteers should be empowered to understand and control their own personal safety and can assist with first aid only if they are trained, available and comfortable with the task.

- Volunteers should be trained on where to locate available first-aid kits and if there are certified first-aid providers on-site.
- Volunteers should not be relied upon for, nor expected to provide, first-aid response. Volunteers may respond of their own volition if they have been trained and certified outside of the Habitat ReStore.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Determine needs and establish one or multiple first-aid kits on-site.
 - Create a checklist for first aid-supplies.
 - Establish a list of action steps for incident reporting, including witness statements and report forms.
 - Restock first-aid supplies as needed.
 - Consider providing first-aid certification opportunities for staff members.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- What to do when an incident has occurred.
- Location of and how to use basic first-aid supplies.
- How to complete timely incident reports.
- Best practices for preventing heat and cold stress.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.132](#).
- Required [personal protective equipment](#).
- Recommendations and guidance for additional PPE.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's requirements](#) in relation to personal protective equipment.
- ☐ Identify and acquire the [personal protective equipment](#) that is necessary for the store.
- ☐ Receive staff and volunteer training by a qualified individual or Competent Person¹ on the proper use of required PPE.

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.

I. PERSONAL SAFETY FOR STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Personal protective equipment

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

[Personal protective equipment](#), or PPE, is critical to the safety of staff members and volunteers. Because each Habitat ReStore has different materials that it handles and accepts for donation, PPE needs will differ as well. This chapter covers the different kinds of PPE, when they are necessary, and how to train staff members and volunteers on their proper use.

OSHA REQUIREMENTS

Affiliate and store management are both responsible for identifying conditions that would necessitate the use of PPE and to ensure proper use of PPE by staff members and volunteers ([OSHA 1910.132\(d\)](#)). Additionally, the affiliate is required to provide most PPE at no cost to the staff and volunteers ([OSHA 1910.132\(h\)](#)). If staff members or volunteers choose to provide their own PPE, management must ensure the adequacy and sanitation of those items ([OSHA 1910.132\(b\)](#)) and that adequate training has occurred and been recorded.

CLOTHING

All staff members and volunteers should equip themselves with suitable clothing for the store environment (consult with your affiliate regarding individual dress code requirements).

- Avoid loose-fitting or frayed clothing, which may get caught on merchandise, racking or equipment.
- Large earrings or neckwear could get caught on objects and are best avoided.

EYE PROTECTION

Although most tasks at a Habitat ReStore do not pose serious eye hazards, there are times protective eyewear is necessary (e.g., when sawing lumber or using power tools or when you are exposed to chemicals). Safety glasses with side shields are required when operating power tools or anytime an eye hazard is present ([OSHA 1910.133\(a\)\(2\)](#)). For staff members and volunteers who wear prescription lenses, the safety glasses must either incorporate the correct prescription in the design or be able to be worn over the prescription lenses ([OSHA 1910.133\(a\)\(3\)](#)).

FOOTWEAR

All staff members and volunteers, whether on the sales floor, in the receiving area or on the truck, are required to wear appropriate footwear. Shoes should be closed-toe with appropriate grip on the sole to avoid slips. Open-heel/open-toe shoes of any kind — sandals, flip-flops, etc. — should not be permitted because of the potential for injury. Proper footwear should be worn regardless of the task or activity assigned (e.g., assisting with clerical tasks). If a staff member or volunteer reports to work with incorrect footwear, they should be required to change shoes before beginning any task.

Shoes or boots with a steel toe are recommended for staff members and volunteers who work primarily with heavy materials. The affiliate should consider providing puncture-resistant insole inserts to staff members and volunteers who perform work on active construction and/or deconstruction sites. These inserts can help prevent puncture wounds caused by stepping on sharp objects such as discarded nails.

HAND PROTECTION

Gloves must be worn when handling any material with the potential for splinters, sharp edges, chemical residue of a corrosive nature, and/or fiberglass material that may come into contact with skin ([OSHA 1910.138\(a\)](#)).

Before acquiring any specific type of glove in bulk, be sure to evaluate all tasks that staff members and volunteers will be performing to ensure that the gloves are suitable for the needed level of protection ([OSHA 1910.138\(b\)](#)).

HEAD PROTECTION

Staff members and volunteers must wear a protective hard hat when working in areas where there is a potential hazard of falling objects ([OSHA 1910.135\(a\)](#)). For most Habitat ReStores, this will apply only when doing renovations, moving racking, working with stock on high shelves, or working on a deconstruction site.

OTHER PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- [Earplugs or earmuffs](#) should be worn when using or working near power saws, drills or other loud equipment.
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, or NIOSH, recommends that **silica dust masks** be worn when there is a risk of inhaling sawdust, concrete dust, drywall dust (silica), fiberglass insulation, etc.

TRAINING STAFF MEMBERS

Each staff member (and each volunteer performing tasks that require PPE) must be trained on the following ([OSHA 1910.132\(f\)\(1\)](#)):

- When PPE is necessary.
- What PPE is necessary.
- How to properly put on, take off, adjust and wear PPE.
- The limitations of PPE.
- Anytime a fall arrest system is used, a Competent Person¹ must inspect it and train the user before the system is employed.
- The proper care, maintenance, useful life and disposal of PPE.

Staff members and volunteers must demonstrate an understanding of the above before they are allowed to perform any task requiring the use of PPE ([OSHA 1910.132\(f\)\(2\)](#)).

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should feel comfortable performing tasks and have all the equipment available to protect themselves during such activities. That said, volunteers are not responsible for obtaining their own training or upholding the management of safety in stores. These measures are to ensure that volunteers are properly supported and are empowered with knowledge about personal safety measures:

- Ensure that all staff members and volunteers are aware that volunteers are not responsible for performing tasks that may require specific PPE. If, however, a volunteer chooses to perform a task that requires PPE usage, training must be provided by a qualified staff member.

¹ An [HFHI-certified Competent Person](#) also may handle the inspection and training.

- If volunteers provide their own PPE from home, a qualified staff member must ensure they are fully trained on proper usage and that the PPE is inspected for defects and adequacy before use.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Evaluate all on-site tasks and identify appropriate PPE.
 - Acquire necessary PPE.
 - Provide staff members and volunteers with training via a qualified individual on proper use of required PPE.
- Check PPE supplies on at least a monthly basis to ensure adequate quantities are available.
- Review proper PPE use with all staff members and volunteers on an ongoing basis.
- Keep hard hats in any vehicle that facilitates donation pickups in the event that a pickup takes place at an active construction or deconstruction area.
- Allocate funds for replacement and maintenance of PPE in the annual budget.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Why PPE is important and required.
- When PPE is necessary and the limitations of PPE.
- What PPE is available and where it is located on site.
- How to use PPE, including care, maintenance, useful life and disposal.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.30](#), [OSHA 1910.23\(b\)](#), [OSHA 1910.23\(c\)](#) and [OSHA 1926.1053](#).
- Requirements for stationary and portable ladders.
- Recommendations for proper ladder usage.
- Requirements for using a fall arrest system.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA requirements pertaining to fall protection and ladders](#).
- ☐ Provide training to any staff member or volunteer who may be exposed to a fall hazard ([OSHA 1910.30\(a\)\(1\)](#), [OSHA 1910.30\(b\)\(1\)](#)).
- ☐ **Use a fall protection system** when a person is:
 - Four feet or more above the ground or floor level (this does not apply to ladders).
 - Above operating machinery.
 - Above hazardous substances or objects.
 - On an elevated work platform other than a platform with guardrails.
- ☐ Before fall protection equipment is used, a Competent Person must provide training on the care, inspection, storage and use of the equipment to individuals who will need to use it.
- ☐ Create a laminated ladder safety checklist and post it near the area where ladders are stored.
- ☐ Train staff members and volunteers on proper ladder use on an ongoing basis.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

I. PERSONAL SAFETY FOR STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Fall protection and ladders

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Falls are a recognized safety hazard in a Habitat ReStore environment. Staff members and volunteers often perform tasks from ladders and portable stairs (e.g., loading merchandise on high shelves and racks, storing equipment in open lofts or mezzanine balconies), therefore the potential for falls that can cause severe injuries is high. It is important to take the proper precautions whenever working from a height above 4 feet.

OSHA REQUIREMENTS

OSHA has clear requirements regarding the components of any ladders used at a Habitat ReStore. It is imperative that any ladder labeled for sale contain these same features, further ensuring the safety of your shoppers, staff members and volunteers.

- [OSHA 1910.23\(b\)](#) includes comprehensive guidelines for all ladder use. Print and post it wherever ladders are used or stored so that any staff member or volunteer can quickly recognize when a ladder is out of compliance and therefore should not be used.
- [OSHA 1910.23\(c\)](#) lists additional requirements for portable ladders. This list should be posted wherever portable ladders are used or stored to ensure safety precautions are followed.

Note: *Because of significant safety risks, donated ladders should not be used or sold unless they arrive brand new (with the original manufacturer's packaging and tags) and have been checked against the Consumer Product Safety Commission's [recall list](#).*

LADDER SAFETY CHECKLIST

As related to [OSHA 1926.1053](#), the following recommendations for proper ladder use will help ensure the safety of staff members and volunteers.

- Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder, especially weight/load limits. Do not remove or paint over manufacturers' labels.
- Always ensure the ladder is inspected before use. If the ladder appears damaged, it must be removed from the sales floor until it can be repaired or discarded. Follow manufacturers' guidelines for any repairs.
- The feet of the ladder cannot be worn, cracked or broken. No other materials may be used in place of feet on ladders.
- Ladders must be **tagged out** of service and destroyed if any defect is present.

Print the more complete [OSHA Quick Card](#), laminate it, and post it anywhere that portable ladders are used and/or stored. Additionally, staff members and volunteers should familiarize themselves with [OSHA's "Fast Facts"](#) for extension ladders prior to use.

TRAINING

Any staff member who may be exposed to a fall hazard must receive fall protection equipment training so that the equipment will be used correctly and safely, providing the maximum benefit. If work involves areas in which fall protection equipment is required, the staff members who use such equipment must receive training from a [Competent Person](#)², and the training should be documented in their personnel record.

Every staff member and volunteer should be trained on safe ladder use as part of their onboarding or initial engagement. OSHA's [Quick Card](#) and [Fast Facts](#) can be used to inform the bulk of the training, but be sure to identify anything that is specific to the Habitat ReStore. Brief ladder safety reviews should be scheduled for all staff members and volunteers on a semiannual basis.

FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

The first step in identifying any necessary fall protection equipment will be to identify the various fall hazards to which staff members or volunteers may be subjected in a store (this will vary from store to store). Identify any place in the facility where staff members or volunteers might be:

- Four feet or more above the ground or floor level.
- Above operating machinery.
- Above hazardous substances or objects.
- On an elevated work platform other than a platform with guardrails.

CARE, INSPECTION, STORAGE AND USE OF EQUIPMENT

Affiliate and ReStore management should work with a [Competent Person](#)³ to identify the appropriate safety equipment required at the store and to assist in training. Trainings should be dedicated to the care, inspection, storage and use of fall protection for staff members and volunteers ([OSHA 1910.28](#)) under the following conditions:

- Staff members and volunteers have the need for fall protection equipment beyond normal portable ladders.
- Staff members and volunteers have tasks that must be performed higher than 4 feet from the ground.

IN-STORE TIPS

For most stores, the majority of the activity that involves a potential fall is climbing to reach merchandise off of shelves.

To minimize this risk:

- Use [portable ladders](#) in order to reach merchandise on upper shelves (do not allow staff members, volunteers or shoppers to climb on pallet racking, shelving or furniture in order to reach merchandise).
 - Staff members and volunteers should be trained to lock the wheels on portable ladders before standing on the ladder.
 - Staff members and volunteers should be trained to maintain at least three points of contact (two feet and one hand) at all times when on a portable ladder.
 - Portable ladders should include a chain to restrict access by shoppers or children, with a sign reading, "For Employee Use Only."

² An [HFHI-certified Competent Person](#) also may provide training.

³ An [HFHI-certified Competent Person](#) also may assist.

- If merchandise is too heavy to be easily carried down a ladder while maintaining three points of contact, that merchandise should be either stored in lower areas (not requiring a ladder for access) or moved with a forklift.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should feel comfortable performing tasks at the store and have all of the necessary equipment available to protect themselves during activities. These measures are to ensure that volunteers are empowered with knowledge to support their own personal safety measures:

- Volunteers are neither required nor expected to perform any tasks that may require a fall arrest system.
- If volunteers choose to perform a task in which they are more than 4 feet off the ground, they must first be instructed by a Competent Person⁴ on proper fall arrest use.
- Volunteers must be trained on proper ladder usage.
- Volunteers cannot use any ladder deemed defective at any time and are not responsible for providing repairs to any ladder.
- Volunteers must be trained to not adapt, adjust or engage a ladder outside of the task for which it was intended.

Suggested activities

- Identify all tasks and spaces that require fall protection procedures and/or equipment.
- Acquire fall protection equipment if needed.
- Train staff members and volunteers who may need fall protection on how to properly use it.
- Program setup:
 - Inspect all ladders on site for OSHA compliance.
 - Create and post a checklist for safe ladder use near the ladder storage area.
 - Train all staff members and volunteers on safe ladder use.
- Review safe ladder use with all staff members (upon hire) and volunteers (upon initial engagement) and twice per year thereafter. Training documentation should be retained in your files.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Identify any tasks where fall protection will be mandatory.
- Identify the Competent Person⁵ responsible for training and maintenance of fall arrest systems.
- If you are unsure whether fall protection is needed for the situation, measure or ask!
- Features of OSHA-compliant ladders.
- Safe ladder usage.
- Donated ladders should not be used or sold unless they are brand new, retain the original packaging and tags, and have been checked against the Consumer Product Safety Commission's recall list.

⁴ An [HFHI-certified Competent Person](#) also may provide instruction.

⁵ An [HFHI-certified Competent Person](#) also may be responsible.

In this chapter

- Information on common causes of back strain and tips for preventing them ([OSHA - back disorders](#)).
- Policy recommendations for loading and unloading vehicles.
- Weight limits for items/loads being moved by one person.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Become familiar with the common causes of back strain (and other soft tissue injuries). Visit [Lockton Affinity training](#), select “Online Safety Courses,” and select the “Back Safety” course to learn more. Enter the access code **W8NAEBTG** to access class content.
- ☐ Prevent back strain by implementing appropriate procedures and by providing staff members and volunteers with the appropriate equipment and training.
- ☐ Create and implement guidelines for safely loading shoppers’ purchases and unloading donations.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

I. PERSONAL SAFETY FOR STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Safe lifting

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Because of the heavy and bulky nature of some merchandise, staff members and volunteers may be considered at a higher risk for back strain and soft tissue injuries. As such, it is important that affiliate and store management adopt and uphold policies and procedures that protect both staff members and volunteers from injury.

PREVENTING BACK STRAIN

Five common causes of back strain:

- Poor posture.
- Repetitive movement.
- Pushing, pulling or lifting things quickly or carelessly.
- Failure to stretch.
- Not employing the “two-person lift rule.”

The majority of back pain arises from improper lifting, so learning a few basic rules about lifting, posture and proper exercise can help keep the back in good shape. Review OSHA’s tips on preventive care [here](#).

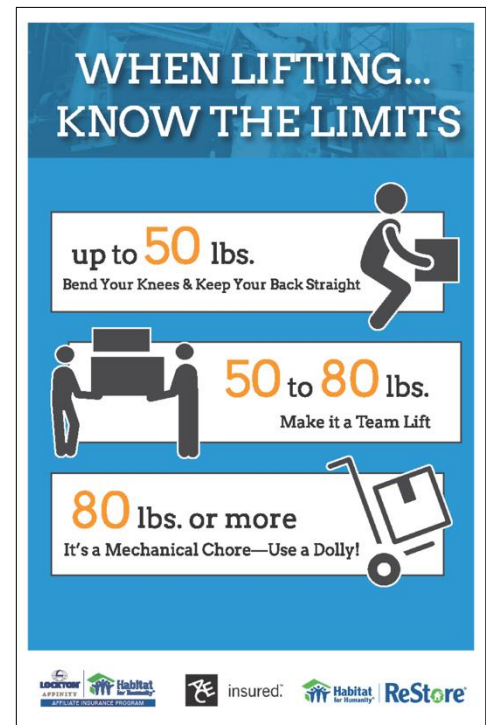
This safe lifting poster is available from Lockton Affinity [here](#). At a minimum, a poster should be posted in the donation receiving area and another should be posted in the vehicle loading/unloading areas. Staff members and volunteers should be made aware of the guidance provided by the poster, along with in-person and online back safety classes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, provides an “[Ergonomic Guidelines for Manual Material Handling](#)” resource that can be used in training staff members and volunteers.

LOADING AND UNLOADING CUSTOMERS’ VEHICLES

When accepting donations or loading purchases, Habitat ReStore staff members and volunteers:

- Must not tie down and secure products for customers. Instead, staff members and volunteers can:
 - Provide twine, rope, tie-downs, shrink-wrap, red flags, etc., for customer use.
 - Offer to load the purchase but explain that staff members or volunteers cannot secure purchases to the vehicle.



- Post signs explaining that staff members and volunteers are unable to provide a tie-down service, so the customer should be prepared with their own supplies.
- Must not place purchases on top of any vehicle, nor assist in placing products in an unsafe manner in any vehicle.
- Should have the authorization to refuse to load a purchase if they feel it cannot safely be loaded or transported in the vehicle provided by the customer.
- Should ensure the purchase will fit into the customer's vehicle before loading by using a tape measure or other means of verification.
- Should allow customers a minimum of two business days to pick up their purchases, enabling them to bring a different vehicle or necessary products to secure their purchases in their vehicle.
- Should use a spotter who will ensure that the purchase or donation can be loaded or unloaded safely without causing damage to the customer's vehicle or injury to staff members, volunteers or shoppers.
- Should use gloves when loading or unloading donations to avoid potential cuts, stabs, splinters, etc.

IN-STORE TIPS

Ensuring that staffing levels meet shopper or donor demand is a key preventive measure. Staff members and volunteers should have trained assistance available to help them safely load, unload or stock an item. If the load weighs more than 50 pounds, staff members and volunteers should always ask for help.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should feel comfortable performing tasks at the store and have all the equipment available to protect themselves during activities. These measures are to ensure that volunteers are empowered with knowledge to support their personal safety measures:

- Upon initial engagement and routinely afterward, volunteers should be trained on proper safe lifting techniques to avoid potential injuries.
- Volunteers must not be expected to perform tasks that they do not have training to perform nor ones that they do not feel comfortable performing.
- Volunteers should not lift or move anything that may be beyond their capabilities without staff assistance.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - An "Ergonomics" class can be found by going to hfahffiliateinsurance.com/restores/, clicking on "Online Safety Courses" and entering access code W8NAEBTG.
 - Ensure that the Habitat ReStore facility is adequately staffed so that when a staff member needs assistance with lifting, loading or unloading, such assistance is available.
 - Print and prominently display the "[Safe Lifting](#)" poster in multiple areas.
 - Verify that the store has an adequate supply of well-maintained equipment to assist with moving heavy items and loads.
 - Equipment is available for donation pickups in the ReStore vehicle (pallet jacks, appliance dollies, gloves, etc.).
 - Adopt policies and procedures for safely loading and unloading vehicles, and document training.
 - Provide staff members and volunteers with training on:
 - Safe lifting techniques.
 - Weight limits for one-person lifting.
 - When and how to use pallet jacks, forklifts, appliance dollies, and/or hand trucks for moving heavy loads.
- Continually ensure the following:
 - Safe lifting training is provided to all staff members (upon onboarding) and volunteers (upon initial engagement) before lifting merchandise.
 - Well-maintained equipment is available to assist with moving heavy objects or loads and is taken out of service when identified as defective.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Back strain is a common injury, but it can be prevented by applying simple techniques.
- Use additional assistance and/or the proper equipment when moving heavy items or loads.
- DO NOT attempt to lift heavy items with just one person, regardless of perceived strength or PPE.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to OSHA [1904.39](#) and [1904.32](#).
- Recommendations for handling incidents.
- Reporting requirements for incidents.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's related requirements](#) (a guide for the affiliate and store staff can be found [here](#)).
- ☐ Establish procedures for handling incidents.
- ☐ Establish procedures for [reporting and recording](#) a fatality or severe injury to OSHA.
- ☐ Establish procedures, in regard to Lockton Affinity, for nonemployee — shopper, donor, volunteer, contractor — [incident reporting](#).
- ☐ Train the staff on the location of appropriate forms and procedures for reporting incidents.
- ☐ Volunteers are not to be involved in any capacity regarding incident reporting other than providing a witness statement if they observed an incident.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

I. PERSONAL SAFETY FOR STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Incident reporting

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Creating a culture that prioritizes safety will prevent many incidents, but affiliate and store leaders should still be prepared if a “near miss” or a serious injury occurs. Habitat ReStore leaders will need to know how to react, how to provide quick and appropriate care to any injured party, and how to complete proper internal and external reporting.

The majority of U.S. Habitat affiliates use Lockton Affinity as their insurance provider. As such, [Lockton and its online resources](#) are frequently referenced throughout this chapter. Any affiliate using a different insurer should contact its own provider for additional guidance.

Note: *An employer's record-keeping requirements may be impacted by its number of employees; check [OSHA's guidance](#) for more information.*

INCIDENT ACTION STEPS

When an incident occurs, it is important that staff members and volunteers do not admit fault or liability to the injured party or offer to pay expenses. The Habitat ReStore staff should empathize with the injured party and get them the help they need as quickly as possible.

1. Call 911 if the incident has caused a serious injury and the injured party needs immediate care.
2. Administer first aid (preferably done by a trained individual).
3. Notify the affiliate that there has been an incident.
4. Complete an [incident report](#) and any applicable [witness report forms](#) regardless of the degree of injury.
5. If applicable, take pictures and/or video of the scene, but never take pictures or video of the injured party.
6. If applicable, take the object that potentially caused the injury out of service immediately, and ensure the object is tagged “**hold for claim review**” so that it is not accidentally disposed of or destroyed.
7. Notify your insurance provider. If your provider is Lockton Affinity, its contact information can be found [here](#).

INCIDENT REPORTS

Habitat ReStore leaders should complete a report when any incident causing injury occurs. In the event of an incident that does not result in injury, illness or damage (commonly known as a “near miss”), leaders should still complete an [incident report](#) for internal review. Volunteers may be asked to complete [witness reports](#) as appropriate.

- A Lockton incident report template is available [here](#).
- When completing an incident report, ensure that it includes as much information about the injured party as possible. If no information is available, label the incident report as a “John or Jane Doe” or “Unknown.”

- If applicable, have any witnesses complete a [witness statement](#).
- If your provider is Lockton, incident reports can be called in, faxed, emailed or [completed online here](#). Incident reports should be completed and called in as soon as possible, ideally within 24 to 48 hours.
- Incident reports and witness statements must be kept on file for five years from the date of the incident ([OSHA guidance here](#)).
- If an injured third party requests records pertaining to the incident, contact your insurance provider quickly to avoid any delays in addressing the request. The claims adjuster will help you ensure that any documentation release is done correctly and follows proper procedures. Note: Do not release any information to a third party without the express permission of the claims adjuster.

CLAIMS REPORTING

If Lockton Affinity is your insurance provider, information on claims reporting is below.

File a claim online:	Online claim submission
File by phone:	(855) 434-4223
File by email:	Workers' compensation: esis_fnol@firstnotice.com
	Accident medical and disability: ACEAandHCLAIRMS@acegroup.com
	Other lines of coverage: HabitatFNOL@acegroup.com

If your affiliate uses a different provider, you can fill in the blank chart below with your provider's information.

File a claim online:	
File by phone:	
File by email:	

REPORTING GUIDANCE

OSHA's reporting requirements vary based on total number of employees and a few other factors. **There are reporting requirements that apply to all Habitat ReStores**, regardless of the number of employees ([OSHA 1904.39](#)):

- A work-related fatality must be reported to OSHA within **eight hours** of the incident.
- Affiliate or store leaders are required to notify OSHA within **24 hours** when an employee suffers a work-related hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye.

Additionally:

- If the combined total of employees between the affiliate and the store was more than 10 at any time during the past calendar year, OSHA injury and illness records must be kept ([Form 300](#)).
- If the combined total of employees between the affiliate and the store was more than 20 at any time during the past calendar year, injury and illness summary data ([Form 300A](#)) must be submitted electronically to OSHA (portal [here](#)).
- More information on determining company size and potential exemptions are addressed in [OSHA 1904.1\(b\)\(1\)](#) and [1904.1\(b\)\(2\)](#). Read more about OSHA's record-keeping rules [here](#).

Any additional and specific reporting requirements can best be determined by visiting [OSHA's Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements](#) landing page. Affiliate and store leaders also should become familiar with the guidance under [OSHA 1904.1](#) (access a convenient FAQ sheet [here](#)).

OSHA Forms 300 and 300A can be downloaded and printed in either Word or PDF format [here](#). At the end of every calendar year, a [summary](#) of the OSHA 300A log must be created, [certified by an executive](#), and [posted](#). Because this will be a publicly viewable document, be sure to omit any personally identifying information from this summary.

THIRD-PARTY AND VOLUNTEER INCIDENT PROCEDURES

Detailed procedures for addressing an incident or injury involving a third party, including volunteers, are available via Lockton Affinity [here](#). Affiliate and store management should read through detailed guidance provided for each of the 12 steps listed below.

Lockton Affinity recommends the following steps:

- Step 1: Identify the Habitat contact person.
- Step 2: Never admit liability.
- Step 3: Provide immediate medical help.
- Step 4: Notify the police or sheriff's department.
- Step 5: Get the facts:
 - 5A. Complete an incident report ([Incident Report](#) form).
 - 5B. Photograph the scene (but never the person injured).
 - 5C. Interview witnesses.
 - 5D. Tag and secure equipment.
- Step 6: Report the incident immediately to [CHUBB](#).
- Step 7: Keep in contact with the injured party.
- Step 8: Be aware of any need for HFHI public relations.
- Step 10: Retain copies of all paperwork for five years.
- Step 11: DO NOT distribute incident reports.
- Step 12: DO NOT discuss any claim outside of the insurance company.

IN-STORE TIPS

It is recommended that the affiliate and store leaders create a record-keeping system in a secure office or location in the store.

- Keep copies of blank [incident reports](#) and [witness statements](#) in the [Emergency Action Plan](#) binder.
- Keep records of "[near miss](#)" incidents for training purposes. These types of incidents do not have to be reported to CHUBB/ACE.
- Include direction and training for store management to use the online reporting portal at [hfhaffiliateinsurance.com](#).

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should not be expected to manage the incident reporting process, but they should be empowered and encouraged to support all individuals in the store by understanding the reporting process.

- Volunteers should report any incidents to affiliate or store staff members immediately.
- Volunteers should not become involved with any incident proceedings other than providing a witness statement to the affiliate and insurance company.
- Volunteers should be aware they should not engage or comment on any incident with the injured parties or their representatives.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Establish procedures for handling incidents.
 - Establish procedures for reporting and recording incidents.
- Train staff members and volunteers on procedures and resources for incident reporting and on their appropriate roles.
- At least monthly, review any incident reports and train staff members and volunteers on how the incident could have been prevented.
 - Review all “near-miss” incidents with staff members and volunteers and ensure that any identified hazards have been rectified.
 - Use this information to enhance safety training that is provided to staff members and volunteers.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, both the affiliate and store management are responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Affiliate and Habitat ReStore procedures in the event of an incident.
- Location of forms and proper procedures for recording and reporting incidents.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, or [CPSC](#), and the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, or [CPSIA](#).
- Information on donations that should not be accepted or sold.
- Instructions to sign up for recall alerts from the CPSC.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with the CPSC's [Reseller's Guide to Selling Safer Products](#).
- ☐ Identify products that may not be accepted or sold by the Habitat ReStore.
- ☐ Ensure that clear direction regarding the products is shared with store staff members and volunteers.
- ☐ Implement a screening process to keep unsafe items out of the Habitat ReStore.
- ☐ Sign up for notifications of product recalls in order to be aware of products that are not safe to accept or sell.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

II. GENERAL HABITAT RESTORE SAFETY COMPONENTS

Donation and product safety

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Because Habitat Restores are a donation-driven business, the merchandise that arrives at a store is unpredictable and can sometimes be unsafe or illegal to accept or sell. Leaders should strive to keep the donation experience as positive as possible for the donor, but safety should always be the top priority. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, or CPSC, provides several resources that will help the affiliate and store leaders determine the items that are unsafe to sell and will help them implement a screening process to ensure that unsafe items do not unintentionally make it to the sales floor:

- [Resale/Thrift Store Information Center](#)
- [Resellers Guide to Selling Safer Products](#)
- [Resale and Thrift Store Frequently Asked Questions](#)

UNACCEPTABLE DONATIONS

Affiliate and store leaders must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including those that relate to lead-based paint and other lead-based products. Affiliates and store leaders must adopt and follow a reasonable screening process for all incoming products to detect those that have been recalled, that may contain lead paint, or that may not be safe to sell at a Habitat ReStore.

LEAD

Any products with a lead content exceeding any applicable legal limit are not to be sold in the store. Because of [regulations established in 2014](#), faucet manufacturers decreased or eliminated the lead in residential kitchen faucets, bathroom faucets, bar faucets, drinking fountains, water heaters, dishwashers and icemakers. The national standard for certifying a plumbing fixture's "lead-free" status is determined by the National Sanitary Foundation, or NSF. The standard is International Standard 61-Section 9. Any new faucet meeting the NSF 61 standard will have **NSF 61/9** stamped on its cardboard box.

NOTE: *Potable water fixtures that are older than 2014 should not be sold in stores.*

Toys that are more than 40 years old and toys that are heavier than what one would expect based on appearance may contain lead. Children's jewelry can be rubbed on paper; if it leaves a gray mark, it may contain lead.

The following items can present various hazards and should not be accepted for resale:

- Unframed glass.
- Oil-based paint.
- Partially full cans of paint.
- Ladders (unless brand new from the manufacturer with all labels present) ([OSHA 1910.23](#)).
- Rolled flashing, unless safe precautions can be taken (e.g., gloves are available and used).

- Used pump sprayers with unidentified chemicals or residue present. ([OSHA 1910.1200\(a\)\(2\)](#)).
- Highly caustic chemicals (muriatic acid), highly flammable chemicals or any chemicals that are missing labels.
- Full or partially full propane tanks, unless storage cages are available to store outside of the building.
- Products rated explosive (ammunition or “blanks,” fireworks, firearms, etc.). ([OSHA 1910.109](#)).
- Faucets, ice makers, dishwashers or any other potable water fixture produced before the 2014 [EPA lead-free regulations](#).
- Used mattresses, unless due diligence to state regulations can be met for sanitizing and re-packaging.
- Corded window blinds (see [Best for Kids — cord-free blinds](#)).
- Halogen lamps (because of warnings issued by the CPSC — [CPSC halogen bulbs](#)).
- Fluorescent bulbs outside of original packaging, or older light switches and thermostats (these may be vulnerable to breakage and can cause mercury exposure) (see [OSHA fact sheet: fluorescent bulbs](#)).

Additionally, Lockton Affinity recommends that the following items not be accepted or sold at a Habitat ReStore:

- Gas appliances (including furnaces, water heaters, room heaters), unless they have been inspected by a qualified technician and a waiver of liability has been signed by the customer.
- Used gas lines.
- Any toilets not rated “low-flow” (produced before 1994), which is 1.6 gallons or less.
- Cribs or any other children’s products that may have been recalled or that do not meet federal safety regulations.
- Any gas-powered tools with gas present in the tank. Gas tanks must be emptied for tools to be on the sales floor or present in the building.
- Frayed or worn extension cords, appliance cords, etc.

RECALLED PRODUCTS

When products that are already on the market are determined to be unsafe, they are recalled. The CPSC indicates that it is illegal to sell any recalled product, so it is imperative that leaders remain informed of recalled items and that processes are in place to prevent recalled items from being sold.

The following is directly from the [CPSC Reseller’s Guide](#) (page 4):

If you are in the business of reselling products, you are expected to know the laws, rules, and regulations that apply to your business, including whether a product you are selling has been recalled for a safety issue. It is illegal to sell any recalled product.

- **Search Recalls:** [SaferProducts.gov](#) has a listing of CPSC recalls and consumer reports of harm related to consumer products. Review the list of recalled products before taking a product into inventory or selling it. You also can receive information about CPSC recalls by subscribing to the [CPSC’s recall email list](#).
- **Keep Current:** Subscribe to the CPSC’s email list for resale stores and product resellers, and keep current on information developed specifically for resale stores at [www.cpsc.gov/resale](#).
- **When in doubt, throw it out!** Products used in the nursery, especially cribs and bassinets, have been the subject of numerous recalls and as such should not be accepted for resale.
- **Contact:** For questions about regulatory requirements, contact CPSC’s Office of Education, Global Outreach, and Small Business Ombudsman: Email: Business@cpsc.gov; telephone (301) 504-7999; or contact the CPSC’s Small Business Ombudsman at: [www.cpsc.gov/smallbiz](#) for additional information and guidance for small businesses.
- **Contact:** For questions about enforcement, contact CPSC’s Office of Compliance for inquiries regarding enforcement: Email: sect15@cpsc.gov; telephone: (301) 504-7520.

In addition to the information above, the CPSC recently released the [CPSC Recall App](#) for mobile phones.

SCREENING PROCESS FOR UNSAFE/PROHIBITED PRODUCTS

Habitat ReStores should adopt and follow a reasonable screening process to detect any incoming items that may be unsafe. This process should include, but is not limited to, screening for the following:

- Items that may contain lead-based paint.
This process should, at a minimum, consider the intended use of each product and whether the product is suspected of containing lead paint.
 - Specifically, if a product is intended for children (e.g., cribs; baby carriages; clothing with rhinestones, buttons, snaps or zippers; toys; games; children's jewelry; school supplies) or if children may put the product in their mouths and the product likely contains lead paint, the product should not be sold in the Habitat ReStore.
 - Furniture articles for consumer use (e.g., beds, bookcases, chairs, chests, tables, dressers, desks, sofas) also should be screened during this process for age and potential lead content.
- Items that may be stolen property.
- Items that are otherwise regulated or hazardous.

IN-STORE TIPS

Habitat ReStores should post a list of items that cannot be accepted or sold near all donation receiving areas and in areas where donation pickups are scheduled. This list should be regularly monitored and updated with changes. It's a great tool for staff members and volunteers to refer to, and it also provides an element of awareness for all store visitors. The same list also should be posted on the ReStore website as a tool for donors.

VOLUNTEERS

Because many volunteers assist in performing tasks related to accepting, sorting and shelving donations, all volunteers should be aware that many restrictions exist. Volunteers must not, however, be held responsible for the management of safety regulations or compliance surrounding donations. To instruct volunteers on helping staff members achieve these standards, consider these steps:

- Volunteers should be aware and trained on proper procedures for accepting potentially unsafe donations.
- Volunteers should be trained on how to spot an unsafe item and how to report it to a staff member.
- Volunteers should not be held responsible for any items on the "do not take" list that may have been accidentally accepted.
- Volunteers should not work in the donation center alone, but rather, partner with a paid staff member.
- Volunteers also should understand all safe operation procedures surrounding loading and unloading customer vehicles before assisting with the activity.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Determine items that will not be accepted or sold in the store.
 - Communicate this list to staff members and volunteers verbally and by posting the list near donation receiving areas.
 - Train staff members and volunteers on screening donations, declining donations, and/or disposing of unsafe merchandise.
 - Sign up for CPSC's recall list via email or mobile app.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- It is illegal to sell recalled items.
- Donations should be screened for potential hazards or recalls before being made available for sale.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.21](#) and [OSHA 1910.22](#).
- Requirements to keep all walking and working spaces OSHA-compliant and hazard-free.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with OSHA's related requirements ([1910.21](#) and [1910.22](#)).
- ☐ Establish procedures to ensure walking and working surfaces are maintained and hazard-free.
- ☐ Ensure that all access and egress points are [OSHA-compliant](#).
- ☐ Establish the process for staff members and volunteers to report unsafe or damaged walking and working surfaces.
- ☐ Volunteers should not be held responsible for repairing or rectifying any unsafe walking or working surface.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

II. GENERAL HABITAT RESTORE SAFETY COMPONENTS

Walking and working surfaces

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

OSHA defines a "[walking-working surface](#)" as "any horizontal or vertical surface on or through which an employee walks, works or gains access to a work area or workplace location." In a practical application, this means that the affiliate and store management should create a comprehensive plan specific to their store for possible hazards to staff members, volunteers, shoppers or donors navigating the area that may result in a slip, trip or fall. A process also should be developed that can be used for daily walk-throughs in order to ensure every area has been checked for potential hazards.

ESTABLISH CLEAR AREAS AND MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

OSHA regulations include the [following guidance](#) that affiliate and store leaders should become familiar with related to walking-working surfaces. (Note that this is not an exhaustive list.)

- All of the sales floor, donation center, storerooms, warehouse, restrooms and any other walking-working surfaces must be kept in a clean, orderly and sanitary condition.
- The floor of each workroom must be maintained in a clean and, to the extent feasible, dry condition.
- Walking-working surfaces must be maintained free of hazards such as sharp or protruding objects, loose boards, corrosion, leaks, spills, snow and ice.
- Any changes in floor elevation must be clearly marked to identify potential trip hazards.
- Staff members must ensure that each walking-working surface can support the maximum intended load for that surface.
- Affiliate and store management must provide a safe means of access and egress to and from any assigned area and ensure that each staff member and volunteer uses it.
- Affiliate and store management must ensure that:
 - Walking-working surfaces are inspected regularly (as necessary) and maintained in a safe condition.
 - Hazardous conditions on walking-working surfaces are corrected or repaired before staff members, volunteers or shoppers have access.

ACCESS AND EGRESS POINTS

In the event of an emergency, it is vital that everyone is able to exit the building quickly. Therefore, these areas must be kept clear of obstacles and trip hazards at all times.

TRAINING AND REPORTING PROCESS

Affiliate and store management should have a documented process in place for staff members and volunteers to report walking-working surface obstructions and/or hazards. In the case of an easily rectified trip hazard (such as a piece of merchandise sitting in an aisle), staff members should be empowered to move the item quickly into its proper place. In the case of a hazard that is more difficult to rectify (e.g., a large crack in the concrete floor), mechanisms should be available to quickly restrict access to the affected area using caution tape or “wet floor” signs, and to report the issue for a more permanent fix.

An effective training program for staff members and volunteers is vital to identifying and eliminating potential slip, trip and fall hazards in the store. All staff members and volunteers should have an understanding of these potential hazards and their individual roles in preventing them.

IN-STORE TIPS

During peak donation periods, Habitat ReStores can experience an overflow of merchandise. It is easy for an untrained staff member or volunteer to place merchandise in any available location, which may unintentionally block aisles and other walking-working surfaces, thus creating trip hazards or blocked emergency exit routes. Walking-working surfaces must be clear and unobstructed in every area of the facility that staff members, volunteers, donors or shoppers may access.

Because of the unpredictability of donated merchandise, the layout of a Habitat ReStore can change frequently. Be diligent in keeping emergency exits and fire extinguishers clear of pallets, trash, merchandise and equipment. Emergency exits should have clear 4-foot paths, and fire extinguishers should have 3 clear feet on each side.

- One way to keep appropriate areas accessible is to clearly mark them off as a no-merchandise area. Create designated and clear areas with aisle-marking tape or carpet-marking tape in shopping areas, storage areas and processing areas, and around fire extinguishers, exits and all other walking-working surfaces that should remain clear. This will serve as the primary visual reminder to keep these spaces free from any obstructions and can be incorporated into your overall [merchandising](#) and [fixture](#) strategy. The following clearances are recommended:
 - 7-9 feet for main aisles.
 - 4-6 feet for secondary aisles.
 - No less than 32 inches on tertiary aisles.
- To meet the requirements of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#), or ADA, a minimum of 32- to 36-inch accessible aisles must be created and maintained to accommodate wheelchairs.

Proactive management of merchandise is essential to keeping a store safe. Donated inventory can be unpredictable, but these steps can be taken to keep the volume of merchandise manageable relative to the square footage of the store:

- **Step 1:** Every morning before opening, a designated staff member should review the pickups scheduled for the upcoming week. This will provide an indication of the volume and types of merchandise the store will be receiving.
- **Step 2:** Once weekly donation information is compiled, staff members can walk the sales floor and note the departments that do not have adequate space to accommodate the donations that will be arriving (keeping both the retail showroom and the receiving areas clear of congestion).
- **Step 3:** Price reduction strategies and sales should be implemented to keep merchandise at a manageable level and avoid merchandise crowding.
- **Step 4:** In addition to using the morning walkthrough to manage inventory, the staff can be noting and addressing any other obstructions or hazards on all walking-working surfaces. Any area with a hazard that cannot be immediately corrected should be blocked off to prevent access. This preventive measure should remain in place until the hazard has been eliminated.

Tips to eliminate trip hazards

- Proper housekeeping and work area setup should eliminate as many trip hazards as possible. Poor housekeeping can lead to trip hazards in workplaces.

- Paint or mark changes in floor elevation with bright **yellow paint** and signage to caution staff members, volunteers, donors and shoppers of the identified trip hazard.
- Have any open holes, cracks, spaces, etc., on walking-working surfaces repaired as soon as possible. Until repair work can be completed, any unsafe area should be closed off to shoppers, donors, volunteers and staff members.
- Tape cords and/or cables down to the floor or hang them up out of the way so they do not create a potential trip hazard for individuals walking through that area.
- Immediately address waste materials and spills. Do not allow them to accumulate in working areas. Maintain an ongoing program of waste disposal.
- Prevent sharp objects from protruding into an aisle or other walking-working surface.
- Ceiling fans should not be merchandised at floor level unless measures are taken to prevent blades from being a trip hazard.
- Work areas should be adequately lit to avoid potential injury.
- Use “wet floor” signs in restrooms and at the front entrance whenever floors are wet, and during restroom cleaning.
- Check the parking lot and donation drop-off areas frequently for potholes, changes in elevation, or any other trip hazards. Any noted hazard should be addressed in a timely manner, and appropriate signage should be used to alert drivers and pedestrians to the hazard until it is resolved.

VOLUNTEERS

Although volunteers can be used as a second set of eyes when spotting hazards, they cannot be held responsible for the elimination of such hazards. To provide volunteers with knowledge to help staff members achieve these standards and safely navigate the store environment, consider these steps:

- Train all staff members and volunteers about appropriate roles, reminding them that volunteers are not to be held responsible for rectifying any safety hazard but can be used as a resource for identifying potential slip, trip and fall hazards.
- On a routine basis, train volunteers to feel empowered to identify potential trip hazards and report them to a staff member.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Measure aisles and all walking-working areas to conform with recommended widths:
 - Mark those areas with paint and/or tape.
 - Identify any areas in the store that have an unmovable trip hazard or change in elevation (e.g., a small step up or down). Clearly mark that potential hazard with yellow tape and/or paint, and place signs (e.g., “watch your step”) at the hazard to further notify shoppers, donors, volunteers and staff members.
 - It is recommended that staff members walk the floor before the store opens to verify the following:
 - Any obstructions in aisleways and all other walking-working areas have been addressed.
 - Aisles and walking-working areas are clearly marked.
 - Overcrowded departments have been identified and a markdown/sale strategy to address the issue has been determined.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- The potential consequences of failing to maintain unobstructed walking-working surfaces in the store.
- How to keep walking-working space compliant and free of hazards.
- How to perform inspections.
- What to do if walking-working space is noncompliant.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1926.302](#).
- Recommendations for who is allowed to use power tools and power machinery.
- Guidelines on maintenance and storage of power tools.
- Tips and guidance on establishing procedures for safe tool use and handling.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's related requirements](#) for the use and storage of power tools.
- ☐ Adopt policies stating requirements for eligibility to use power tools.
- ☐ Identify the hazards that are common in power tools, along with the most prevalent defects.
- ☐ Ensure that power tools are used only by staff members and volunteers (18 and older) who have been trained in safe operation and the use of personal protective equipment, or PPE.
- ☐ Understand age-related guidelines and restrictions on power tool use for volunteers ages 16-17, as discussed on page 4 of [Practical Guidance for Engaging Youth Volunteers](#).

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.

II. GENERAL HABITAT RESTORE SAFETY COMPONENTS

Power tools

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Power tools are defined as all fixed or portable machines or tools driven by power and used or designed for cutting, shaping, nailing, stapling or punching wood, metal or similar materials. Staff members and volunteers come into contact with power tools in several different ways. Whether this exposure occurs within the course of a project — building a fixture, putting up a mission wall, etc. — or when tools are donated, these items can cause injury when not used correctly or maintained properly.

- Staff members and volunteers who use power tools should be provided with guidance on inspecting a tool before use in order to identify any potential defects. Additional guidance on the proper use of power tools can be found in OSHA's *Hand and Power Tools* publication [here](#).
- As further described in [Practical Guidance for Engaging Youth Volunteers](#), staff members and volunteers younger than 18 generally cannot interact with power tools and machinery.

HAZARDS AND COMMON DEFECTS

The five most common risks of power tools:

- Electric shock.
- Defective tools.
- Cuts, punctures and other wounds.
- Severed or crushed fingers.
- Shards or debris in the eyes.

These risks can be mitigated significantly by frequent training on the use of proper, well-maintained personal protective equipment. The affiliate and store management team are responsible for the safe conditions of tools and equipment used by staff members and volunteers. Defective tools should not be used at any time ([OSHA 1910.242](#)).

Defective tools are dangerous. Maintain tools to keep them in a safe operating condition by following these tips:

- Power tools must be inspected before each use to ensure that they are in safe operating condition (this includes tools supplied by volunteers) ([OSHA 1910.242](#)).
- Tools designed to accommodate guards must be equipped with guards while in use ([OSHA 1910.212](#)).

IN-STORE TIPS

Follow these easy dos and don'ts, and share them with staff members and volunteers.

DO:

- Use tools for their intended purpose only.
- Follow all OSHA regulations when operating pneumatic tools. ([OSHA 1926.302\(b\)](#)).
- Follow correct PPE regulations regarding eye and face protection. ([OSHA 1910.133](#)).
- Ground electric power-operated equipment by means of a separate ground wire or use double-insulated tools. Ground plugs should **NEVER** be cut off. ([OSHA 1910.334\(a\)\(3\)](#)).
- Plug electrical equipment into a ground fault circuit interrupter, or GFCI, in wet or damp conditions and when using a generator power source. ([OSHA 1910.304](#)).

DON'T:

- Use a tool unless properly trained in its intended use.
- Use the electrical cord to lift or lower the tool, as this may damage safeguards on the tool.
- Bypass broken switches on tools by plugging and unplugging the cord. A broken or damaged tool should be tagged out of service until repairs can be made or the tool is destroyed.

Follow these “10 Rules to Preserve 10 Fingers” and post this list in the Habitat ReStore:

1. *Beware of pinch points* — Avoid placing hands and fingers where they can get trapped or caught.
2. *Expect the unexpected* — When using wrenches, bars and hand tools, anticipate that the tool may slip or that the object on which you are working may suddenly give way or loosen.
3. *Inspect tools* — Do this before you begin work. Make sure they are in [good condition](#).
4. *Do not work on moving equipment* — Working on moving equipment represents a higher danger level to hands and fingers. OSHA's “Basics of Machine Safeguarding” can be found [here](#).
5. *If you remove guards, replace them* — Any guards removed for machine maintenance, repairs or any other reason must be replaced immediately and before resuming normal operations. More information on guards can be found at [OSHA 1910.212](#).
6. *Be mindful of equipment that starts automatically* — Prior to maintenance and repairs, turn automatic equipment off at the power source with proper [lockout](#) procedures if there is any possibility of automatic startup. Always keep a safe distance from such machinery during normal operations.
7. *Disconnect electrical equipment/tools at the power box* — Or unplug the tool before working it. Flash burns can be caused by electrical equipment shorting out; electrical shock can kill you.
8. *Always follow equipment lockout/tagout procedures* ([OSHA 1910.147\(e\)\(3\)](#)).
9. *Avoid touching equipment or lines that are or may be hot.*
10. *If the work being done calls for safety gloves, wear them.*

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should not be held responsible for managing a safety program or compliance. However, volunteers can assist staff members with tasks related to the operation of power tools — and in some cases can operate them. Keep in mind these restrictions and guidance for volunteer power tool usage:

- Volunteers younger than 18 are never allowed to operate power tools.
- Volunteers should not perform tasks using power tools unless they have been thoroughly trained on their proper use and are provided the necessary PPE.
- Volunteers should be made aware that there are restrictions related to appropriate donation acceptance and should be empowered to refuse defective tool donations.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Inspect all power tools to verify their fitness for use. Dispose of defective tools.
 - Create and implement a policy requiring inspection before the use of any power tool.
 - Ensure that any staff member or volunteer using power tools is 18 or older and has received proper training.
- Include appropriate financial allocation in the annual budget to properly maintain and/or replace power tools as necessary.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Staff members and volunteers shouldn't use a tool unless they have been properly trained, are issued PPE and understand its intended use.
- Staff and volunteers younger than 18 may not use power tools or machinery.
- When and how to use PPE in relation to power tools.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.334\(a\)](#).
- Recommendations for proper extension cord use.
- Electrical outlet best practices.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's related requirements](#).
- ☐ Establish policies and procedures for proper extension cord use.
- ☐ Establish policies and procedures for proper electrical outlet use.
- ☐ Train staff members and volunteers on proper use of extension cords and electrical outlets.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

II. GENERAL HABITAT RESTORE SAFETY COMPONENTS

Extension cords and outlets

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Habitat ReStores exist in buildings of all shapes, sizes and ages. As such, each facility will have its own unique set of challenges with access to electrical outlets relative to the equipment that staff members and volunteers use in daily operations.

Before taking occupancy of a facility, an inspection of the existing electrical system should be conducted by a qualified person or agency to determine that the capacity of the system meets the needs of the store. The affiliate should identify any needed repairs or upgrades. These inspections and upgrades are often required in order to obtain a certificate of occupancy. (The requirements for a certificate of occupancy vary by state and municipality; check with local regulatory agencies for more information.)

EXTENSION CORD USAGE

- Flexible cords may not be fastened with staples or otherwise hung in such a fashion as could damage the outer jacket or insulation ([OSHA 1910.334\(a\)\(1\)](#)).
- Extension cords shall be visually inspected before use on any shift; check extension cords for any frays or broken grounding plugs ([OSHA 1910.334\(a\)\(2\)\(i\)](#)).
- Extension cords should be used only to address a temporary need. An ongoing or permanent need (e.g., the cash wrap does not have enough outlets available) should be addressed by having a qualified professional install new outlets.
- Do not use surge protectors or outlets beyond their capacity; they should be used in accordance with any instructions included on the label ([OSHA 1910.304\(b\)\(2\)](#)).
- Ensure extension cords are not run through doorways or placed under carpets where they could be a trip hazard.
- Any cord that is cut in a way that exposes insulation should be removed from service immediately ([OSHA 1926.416\(e\)\(1\)](#)).

USE OF ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Affiliate and store management should convey the following information on the proper use of electrical outlets to all staff members and volunteers (please note that this list is not exhaustive):

- Turn off and unplug electrical equipment that is not in use.
- The use of multiple cords, surge protectors or extensions from the same outlet (commonly referred to as "daisy chaining") is unsafe, presents a fire hazard, and must not be practiced. ([OSHA 1910.303\(b\)\(1\)](#)).
- Restroom receptacles and any place an outlet may be exposed to water shall have ground-fault circuit interrupters installed for the protection of staff members, volunteers and shoppers. ([OSHA 1910.304\(b\)\(3\)\(i\)](#)).

VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteers are not to perform any function in regard to installing or repairing electrical building fixtures, power tools, etc.
- To be empowered in their own personal safety measures, volunteers should be trained on all proper outlet and extension cord usage and storage. However, volunteers must not be held responsible for the management of safety regulations and compliance.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Inspect all extension cords currently in use.
 - Inspect all building electrical outlets.
 - Train all existing staff members and volunteers on the proper use of extension cords and electrical outlets.
 - Establish a daily and/or pre-shift check of extension cords and electrical outlets.
 - Train all staff members (upon onboarding) and volunteers (upon initial engagement) on the proper use of extension cords and electrical outlets.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Potential hazards of extension cords and electrical outlets.
- Proper inspection and use of extension cords and electrical outlets.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.178](#).
- How to train and certify forklift operators.
- Inspection and maintenance for forklifts.
- Safe operation of forklifts.
- Proper storage for propane.
- Safe battery charging stations.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's related requirements](#).
- ☐ Understand the regulations for [certification](#) and establish procedure for training staff members to safely operate forklifts.
- ☐ Maintain a list of trained staff members who are [certified](#) to operate forklifts.
- ☐ Create a [forklift inspection checklist](#) for daily use.
- ☐ Create a maintenance record and checklist for all power-operated equipment.
- ☐ Ensure propane use and storage is [OSHA compliant](#).
- ☐ Identify [OSHA-compliant battery charging stations and storage location\(s\)](#).

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.

II. GENERAL HABITAT RESTORE SAFETY COMPONENTS

Forklift safety

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Forklifts are a type of [powered industrial truck](#), or PIT, and are commonly seen in Habitat ReStores. There are two general types of powered industrial trucks: electric-powered (battery) and internal combustion engine-powered (gas/liquid petroleum gas/diesel). Each of these general types has a variety of different configurations and attachments. Because each type of forklift is unique, affiliate and store management should customize any template checklist to fit the vehicle on site.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

OSHA does not provide a forklift certification course, but any staff member who operates a forklift on site must be trained and certified. Affiliate and store leaders may choose to hire an outside company to provide training, or training can be facilitated by a certified and experienced operator within the organization ([OSHA 1910.178\(I\)\(2\)\(iii\)](#)). If you are struggling to find training, consider checking with any local dealer that sells forklifts; they will often know where local training can be found. The [training](#) must consist of three parts ([OSHA 1910.178\(I\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#)):

- Formal instruction (e.g., lecture, discussion, interactive computer learning, video, written material).
- Practical training (demonstration performed by the trainer and practical exercises performed by the trainees).
- Evaluation of the operator's performance on the site.

Until training and certification are complete, trainees may operate the forklift only under the direct supervision of a trainer and in a space that does not endanger any person on the site ([OSHA 1910.178\(I\)\(2\)\(i\)](#)). Please reference [OSHA 1910.178\(I\)\(3\)](#) for a list of required training content.

Any staff member who is certified to operate the forklift must be evaluated for performance once every three years ([OSHA 1910.178\(I\)\(4\)\(iii\)](#)). Refresher training, including evaluation, is required for any of the following situations ([OSHA 1910.178 \(I\)\(4\)](#)):

- The operator has been observed operating the vehicle in an unsafe manner.
- The operator has been involved in an incident or a near-miss incident.
- The operator has received an evaluation that reveals that the operator is not operating the vehicle in a safe manner.
- The operator is assigned to drive a different type of vehicle.
- A condition in the workplace changes in a manner that could affect safe operation of the vehicle.

Affiliate and store management must ensure that each forklift operator has been trained and evaluated in accordance with [OSHA 1910.178\(I\)](#). Certification for each operator must include the name of the operator, the date of the training, the date of the evaluation, and the identity of the person or people performing the training and/or evaluation ([OSHA 1910.178 \(I\)\(6\)](#)). A list of certified operators and their certification information should be kept on file.

INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

The required forklift operator training includes forklift [inspection and maintenance](#), which the operator is expected to perform. Pre-use inspection by the operator is [required](#). A non-exhaustive inspection checklist is available [here](#). Because each type of forklift is unique, affiliate and store leaders should customize any template checklist to fit the vehicle on site.

In addition to daily operator inspections, the vehicle should be examined by a certified mechanic to determine the following before initial use and annually afterward:

- That the vehicle is in safe working condition.
- That the vehicle is capable of handling its [maximum rated load](#).

If any repair or maintenance needs to be performed, it must be performed [by a trained and authorized mechanic](#). A suggested practice is to keep a record of all maintenance performed along with any operations manuals.

SAFE OPERATION

A detailed list of OSHA recommendations for the [safe operation](#) of forklifts and other powered industrial trucks is cited under [OSHA 1910.178\(I\)\(8\)](#). This list is not exhaustive and should be customized by designated staff members who are familiar with the regulations and requirements.

PROPANE STORAGE

For stores that operate propane-fueled forklifts, the OSHA requirements for storing the propane tanks and the specific hazards surrounding them can be found in [OSHA 1910.110](#). Only trained staff members should be responsible for changing the propane tank on the forklift.

BATTERY CHARGING STATION

For stores that use battery-powered forklifts, OSHA requirements for battery charging stations can be found in [OSHA 1910.178\(g\)](#). Only trained individuals should participate in charging forklift batteries because of the weight of the batteries, the corrosive properties, the potential for shock, and the possibility of explosive fumes.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have restricted access to forklifts and forklift activities. Training should be for awareness purposes only so that volunteers feel empowered to manage their personal safety.

- Volunteers are not allowed to operate any powered industrial trucks (such as forklifts).
- If properly trained by a qualified staff member, volunteers may assist by acting as a “spotter” to ensure the safety of shoppers or donors on the sales floor when a forklift is in use.
- Volunteers cannot be held responsible for any incidents that may occur while performing a “spotter” function.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Ensure all forklift operators are trained and certified.
 - Create a record of forklift operator certifications.
 - Create a forklift pre-shift inspection checklist.
 - Create a forklift binder for inspection, maintenance and other pertinent records.
 - Ensure that proper procedures exist for storage and use of propane and/or charging and maintenance of batteries.
 - Ensure the proper eye wash station or shower has been installed near the battery station.
- Provide training and certification for all incoming operators (must recertify every three years, per [OSHA 1910.178\(I\)\(4\)\(iii\)](#)).
- Perform daily or pre-use inspections for forklift usage and safety.

- Ensure maintenance is performed on a routine basis by a trained and certified mechanic.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Only properly trained and certified staff members may use a forklift.
- The pre-shift forklift checklist or a visual inspection must be completed before use.
- A forklift that does not pass the pre-use inspection must be taken out of service until the necessary maintenance and/or repairs can be performed.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.37](#).
- Recommendations for your exit routes and aisles.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with OSHA's related requirements pertaining to means of egress.
- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with requirements under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#).
- ☐ Establish and maintain clear and unobstructed exits and exit routes with appropriate lighting and marking.
- ☐ Install and maintain an operable employee alarm system ([Employee Alarms](#)).
- ☐ Train staff members and volunteers on the importance of maintaining unobstructed exits and exit routes.

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.

III. FACILITIES AND THE HABITAT RESTORE PHYSICAL SPACE

Means of egress (aisles and exits)

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

In order for a Habitat ReStore to be considered safe, all occupants must be able to find and access an exit very quickly in the event of an emergency. Because of the unpredictable nature of donations (both in volume and in time of day and week), staff members can face some unique challenges in maintaining clear, safe aisles and exits while keeping up with regular tasks. This chapter will assist staff members in determining the appropriate ways to establish clear exit routes and appropriate roles in the maintenance of those routes.

OSHA REQUIREMENTS

Consider contacting the local fire department for assistance with understanding compliance and implementing solutions.

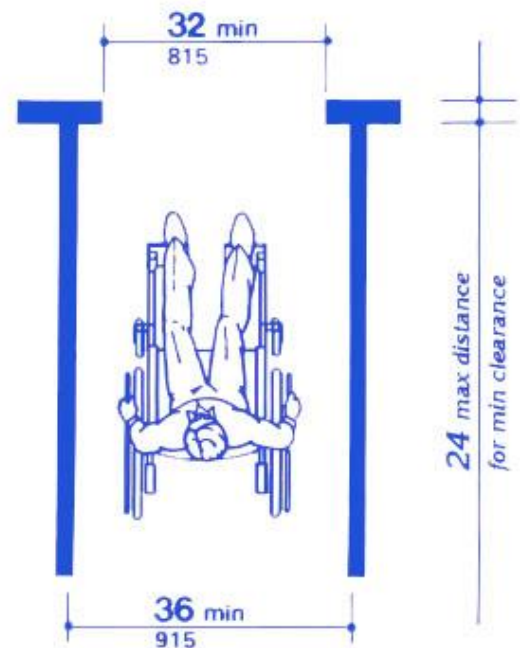
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Affiliate and store staff members should provide an inclusive, welcoming environment. Guidelines provided by the ADA help everyone in the organization do just that.

The ADA requires places of public accommodation operated by private entities (such as retail stores) to be handicap-accessible. Thus, if a retail store was constructed for first occupancy on or after Jan.

26, 1993, it must be designed and built to be readily accessible to people with disabilities unless it is "structurally impracticable" to do so ([ADA Title 42, Ch 126, SubChapter III, Section 12183](#)).

In all aisles and exit routes, store staff members should maintain minimum clear width for a single wheelchair. The minimum clear width for single wheelchair passage is 32 inches at the front point for a maximum length of 24 inches and 36 inches continuously at the back point (as seen in the graphic at right).



EXITS AND EXIT ROUTES

During peak donation periods, Habitat ReStores can experience an overflow of merchandise. When this happens, it is easy for an uninformed staff member or volunteer to place merchandise in any available location, which may unintentionally block aisles and exits that are vital for escape in the event of an emergency. Exits and exit routes (aisles) must be **clear and unobstructed** in retail areas and in every area where staff members or volunteers may be performing tasks.

Because of the unpredictability of donated merchandise, the layout of a store can change frequently. Be diligent in keeping emergency exits and fire extinguishers clear of pallets, trash, merchandise and equipment. Emergency exits must have a clear 4-foot path, and fire extinguishers must have 3 feet of clear space on each side. Obstructions in these areas also can create a trip hazard, which could result in an injury to a staff member, shopper, donor or volunteer.

The most efficient way to keep appropriate areas clear is to clearly mark those areas. Create designated aisles and clear areas with aisle-marking tape and/or carpet-marking tape. This can serve as the primary visual reminder to keep these spaces free from obstructions and should be incorporated into your overall **merchandising** and **fixture** strategy. Exits must be clearly visible and marked by a sign reading "Exit." Exit signs should be lighted, making them easy to spot, and should employ a backup power source in the event of a power outage. If the direction of travel to the exit is not immediately apparent, signs must be posted along the exit route indicating the direction of travel to the nearest exit and area beyond the threshold of an exit. Additionally, the line of sight to an exit sign must clearly be visible at all times ([OSHA1920.37](#)). Also note that exit routes must be maintained during construction, repairs or alterations.

If emergency crews are responding to an incident or fire, they must have a clear path without moving pallets, merchandise, etc. The following clearances are suggested:

- Seven to 9 feet for main aisles, 4 to 6 feet for secondary aisles, and no less than 32 inches on tertiary aisles. Not only does this make emergency response faster, it also gives customers the space they need for shopping carts (so that two people can pass each other in the main aisle) and meets the **Americans with Disabilities Act** requirements of a minimum of 32- to 36-inch accessible aisles.

EMPLOYEE ALARM SYSTEM

Affiliates must install and maintain an operable employee alarm system that has a distinctive signal to warn employees of fire or other emergencies, unless the space is small enough and has visible sight lines to all areas such that employees can promptly see or smell a fire or other hazard in time to provide adequate warning ([OSHA 1910.37e](#)). It is recommended that affiliates outsource this vital piece of equipment to a qualified, experienced vendor to inspect and verify that everything is in working order on a regular basis.

TRAINING STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

As part of their onboarding or initial engagement, every staff member and volunteer should be trained to keep aisles and other designated areas clear, and they should participate in regular refresher trainings. While the onboarding or engagement training will likely be one-on-one, refreshers can and should be incorporated into your regular team meetings at least once each month (and after any incident in which aisles were not clear). Refresher trainings can be brief; they simply need to provide reminders on the importance of keeping the designated spaces clear and information on what to do if an aisle or exit is blocked.

IN-STORE TIPS

The experience levels of staff members and volunteers can vary greatly in regard to incoming donations and merchandise turnover. The added complexity of having shoppers on the sales floor and shifting products means that staff members and volunteers should stay diligent on keeping aisles and exits clear.

Proactive management of merchandise is essential to keeping a store safe. Inventory can be unpredictable, but steps can be taken to keep the volume of merchandise manageable relative to the square footage of your store. Every morning before

opening, the management team should review the pickups that are scheduled for the upcoming week; this will give them a sense of the volume and type of merchandise the store will be receiving.

With that information, merchandise on the sales floor can be reviewed and departments can be identified that do not have adequate space to accommodate the expected donations. Price reduction strategies and sales should be implemented to keep merchandise at a manageable level and avoid merchandise crowding or blocked aisles.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must not be held responsible for managing clear space compliance for aisles and exits, but they can help staff members identify areas that need to be addressed in order for safe navigation through the facility. Volunteers also should be trained so that they can manage their own personal safety measures.

- Volunteers should be trained on aisle width standards.
- Volunteers should have a clear understanding that merchandise should not be block pathways to an exit or create trip hazards in the aisles.
- Volunteers can help staff members maintain clear aisles and exits as part of their service hours, as long as they are comfortable with and trained in best practices for material handling.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Measure aisles for compliance with ADA regulations.
 - Mark exits with tape to keep the area clear of obstructions.
 - Install an employee alarm system.
- It is recommended that the store leader or supervisor walk the floor before opening to verify the following:
 - Any obstructions in aisleways and/or exits have been addressed.
 - Aisles and exits are clearly marked and functional.
 - Overcrowded departments have been identified, and a markdown/sale strategy has been determined to address the issue.
- Take advantage of team meetings to remind all staff members and volunteers of the importance of keeping aisles and exits clear.
 - Verify that all staff members and volunteers are aware of procedures for clearing obstructions when they are spotted.
- Remember to establish contracted service provider checks and verify emergency alarm functionality at least annually.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Be proactive and be on the lookout for obstructions and safety hazards. Act immediately when problems are identified.
- Use tape and/or paint to clearly identify areas where merchandise should not be placed.
- Every staff member and volunteer should be familiar with alarms and understand how to react quickly.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [29 CFR 1910.178](#) and [29 CFR 1910.23](#).
- Requirements for dock door openings.
- Requirements for chocking truck wheels while loading and unloading.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with related [OSHA regulations](#) pertaining to guarding floor and wall openings and holes.
- ☐ Ensure that every wall opening with a drop of more than 4 feet, including loading docks, has an appropriate safety gate.
- ☐ Properly secure the truck gate before unloading a truck.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

III. FACILITIES AND THE HABITAT RESTORE PHYSICAL SPACE

Loading docks

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Any place where people and vehicles can occupy the same general area can be dangerous, including loading docks. Along with the normal safety issues associated with retail loading docks, Habitat ReStores often have the added factor of donor traffic in the same (or nearby) space. Possible causes of injuries at a loading dock include truck separation from the dock and falls from the dock, particularly when a forklift backs off the platform and falls on the operator. Because these incidents may result in serious injuries or fatalities, implementing safety measures around loading docks is crucial to safe operations.

OSHA REQUIREMENTS

The specific regulations pertaining to loading docks and addressing safe operations concerning powered vehicles at loading docks can be found [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.

DOCK DOORS AND GUARDRAILS

When the dock is not in use, the dock doors should remain closed. In some circumstances (e.g., spaces without air conditioning or with nearly constant donation drop-off traffic), a store may have reasons to temporarily keep a dock door open when it is not in use. Therefore, a guardrail must be installed to prevent falls from the dock if the door is open ([OSHA 1910.28\(b\)](#)). The barricade must have a minimum height of 42 inches ([OSHA 1910.23\(e\)\(1\)](#)).

Additionally, every opening from which there is a drop of more than 4 feet must be guarded by a fall protection barrier ([OSHA 1910.23\(b\)](#)). The visual barrier should stand out. Yellow is preferred because it's the safety color commonly used to indicate "warning." The barrier should be able to be opened and closed quickly to accommodate workflow.

UNLOADING TRUCKS AT THE LOADING DOCK

- Always **chock the wheels** of trucks or vehicles parked at the dock ([OSHA 1910.178\(k\)\(1\) and \(m\)\(7\)](#)).
- Turn off the vehicle's engine when docked to avoid the inhalation of exhaust fumes via the dock door.
- Use a spotter when operating a forklift.
- Ensure dock safety rails are used anytime a dock door is open and a vehicle is not present.
- Staff members and volunteers should never jump to the ground from the dock (see [OSHA Worker Safety Series: Warehousing](#), page 3, for more information).

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should not be left alone on a loading dock without training, direction and knowledge of the specific safety restrictions for that area.

- Volunteers over the age of 18 may assist staff members in unloading Habitat ReStore vehicles, provided they have received proper training.
- Volunteers must be trained on proper use of hand-operated equipment when moving materials.
- Volunteers must be trained on proper PPE when unloading donations (and before use).
- To prevent injuries, volunteers should understand and use all necessary precautions when working around loading docks.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Identify all areas that have a drop of 4 feet or greater.
 - Acquire and install appropriately sized gates or barriers for each of those areas.
 - Install signage on gates indicating that they must be in place when dock doors are open and the dock is not actively in use.
 - Establish written policies and procedures to ensure that vehicles are properly parked before loading or unloading, and train staff members and volunteers on those procedures.
 - Remember that volunteers are not responsible for ensuring proper placement of wheel chocks or dock gates but can alert staff members regarding noncompliance of policy.
- Ensure that the barrier is in place when the dock door is open for ventilation and at any time a truck is not present.
- Regularly inspect dock gates to verify that they are in working condition.
- Perform an unscheduled visual review of unloading procedure (in person or via camera) to verify that policies are being followed.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Chock the wheels of the truck anytime it is parked at the dock.
- Use a spotter when operating a forklift.
- Ensure dock safety gates are used anytime the dock door is open and a truck is not present.
- To prevent potential injury, jumping to the ground from the dock is not recommended.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.38](#).
- Requirements for an emergency action plan, or EAP.
- Template to create an emergency action plan.
- Tips and preventive maintenance to support emergency action readiness.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with requirements for [OSHA 1910.38](#) pertaining to emergency action plans.
- ☐ Develop an emergency action plan for the local Habitat ReStore: OSHA has an [EAP e-tool](#).
- ☐ Train staff members and volunteers on how to understand and use the EAP.
- ☐ Establish training for staff members at onboarding and for volunteers upon initial engagement, along with regular refreshers.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

III. FACILITIES AND THE HABITAT RESTORE PHYSICAL SPACE

Emergency action plan

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

An emergency action plan, or EAP, must be created to address all emergencies the affiliate may reasonably expect in the store. Examples include fire, toxic chemical releases, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards and floods.

Store and affiliate management should work together to ensure all [OSHA 1910.38](#) regulations are addressed in the store. When an emergency occurs, it is mandatory per OSHA to have plans and policies in place to address any situation quickly and efficiently in order to minimize the damage to people, equipment and the environment.

Because every store is different, the emergency action plan may be adjusted to fit each store. It is important to adapt this plan to address the potential emergencies and hazards related to each situation.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF AN EAP

The [emergency action plan](#) should be kept in a binder and next to a phone in an area that all staff members and volunteers can easily access. It should include:

Contact information:

- ☐ Emergency contact information for all staff members and volunteers.
- ☐ Nonemergency numbers (plumber, locksmith, landlord, board members, etc.).
- ☐ Contact information for store and/or affiliate leaders who are familiar with the emergency action plan and can provide further guidance.
- ☐ [Lockton and Chubb](#) contact information. (If your affiliate uses a different insurance provider, that provider's contact information should be listed instead.)
- ☐ [OSHA reporting information](#) for cases of severe injury or fatality.

Site information:

- ☐ The [facility floor plan](#), clearly outlining all emergency exits and gathering places.
- ☐ Instructions on location and use of the [employee alarm system](#).

Checklists, plans and guidance:

- ☐ Checklist for [reporting](#) all emergencies/incidents. OSHA's reporting regulations can be found [here](#), and record keeping regulations can be found [here](#).
- ☐ [Emergency evacuation plan](#), including procedures to account for all employees after an evacuation.
- ☐ [Severe weather](#) plan, if pertinent to your location.
- ☐ [Bomb threat](#) procedures.
- ☐ [Code Adam \(missing child\) procedures](#).
- ☐ [Active shooter procedures](#). (A Lockton class on active shooters is available [here](#).)

- ☐ **Robbery procedures.** (Consider contacting your local police department for assistance in designing effective procedures to prevent and react to a robbery.)
- ☐ **Fire protection plan.**
- ☐ Medical emergencies and first-aid procedures.

Resources for emergency situations:

- ☐ **Instructions for reporting an incident.**
- ☐ **Incident reports** and **witness statements.**

POWER-DOWN KITS

In a **power outage**, a kit with the following items can help ensure the safety of shoppers, donors, staff members and volunteers:

- Flashlights
- Bottled water
- Emergency blankets
- Weather radio
- First-aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Other items as needed

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Resources specific to tornado-prone regions can be found at [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov).
- Resources specific to hurricane-prone regions can be found at [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).
- Resources specific to earthquake-prone regions can be found at [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov) and [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

VOLUNTEERS

In order to best manage their safety and assist the store in an emergency, volunteers must be trained on the following:

- All evacuation procedures, including:
 - All exit routes.
 - Safe gathering place.
 - Location of the emergency action plan binder.
 - Severe weather plan (shelter in place).
- Volunteers cannot be held responsible for the evacuation of staff members, volunteers or shoppers.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Create the emergency action plan.
 - Create power-down kits.
 - Train all staff members and volunteers on the location and use of the emergency action plan and power-down kits.
- Train all staff members (upon onboarding) and volunteers (upon initial engagement) on the location and use of the emergency action plan, and familiarize them with the evacuation plan.
- Review the location of the emergency action plan and use it with staff members and volunteers a minimum of twice per year or as needed. Ensure that the plan is updated with new information as needed.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Every staff member and volunteer should know the location of the emergency action plan and should be familiar with the evacuation plan.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.39 a–f](#).
- Resources for creating a [fire prevention plan](#).
- Guidance on keeping the store free from fire hazards.
- Resources and guidance to prepare for a fire-related emergency.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's related requirements](#).
- ☐ [Create a written fire prevention plan](#) (guidance from OSHA can be found [here](#)).
- ☐ Establish a training program to ensure all staff members and volunteers are trained on recognizing, reporting and controlling fire hazards using the fire prevention plan. Volunteers can assist in recognizing and reporting fire hazards but should not be held accountable for controlling fire hazards.
- ☐ Establish procedures for store walk-throughs (which should occur at least weekly) using a checklist for potential fire risks that includes documentation for follow-up when risks are identified.
- ☐ Ensure that the fire extinguishers and sprinkler system are in working order and are properly inspected and maintained.
- ☐ Establish policies and procedures for the safe handling and storage of potentially combustible materials.
- ☐ Establish a policy to incorporate semiannual fire drills.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

III. FACILITIES AND THE HABITAT RESTORE PHYSICAL SPACE

Fire prevention plan

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a fire prevention plan is to eliminate the potential causes of fire, prevent loss of life and property by fire, and comply with [OSHA standards for fire prevention](#). The [fire prevention plan](#) provides staff members and volunteers with information and guidelines to assist them in recognizing, reporting and controlling fire hazards.

FIRE PREVENTION PLAN REQUIREMENTS

A fire prevention plan must:

- Identify materials that are potential fire hazards and describe proper handling and storage of those materials (e.g., chemicals for cleaning, propane for forklifts, etc.).
- Identify potential ignition sources and proper controls of those materials (e.g., smoking area, sawdust piles, [hot work](#)).
- Describe fire protection equipment and/or systems to control fire hazards (e.g., fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems).
- Identify people responsible for the control and accumulation of flammable or combustible materials.
- Describe good housekeeping practices necessary to control accumulated combustible and flammable waste materials to avoid a fire emergency.
- Provide training to staff members and volunteers about recognizing fire hazards to which they may be exposed inside the store.

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility. All staff members and volunteers should be empowered with the knowledge of how to prevent and respond to fires within the facility. Affiliate and store leaders should provide adequate controls to create a safe workplace. Resources and training also should be provided to all staff members and volunteers to encourage fire prevention and the safest possible response in the event of a fire.

The fire prevention plan for the Habitat ReStore should be placed inside of the emergency action plan for easy reference.

TRAINING

It is vital that all staff members and volunteers are provided with training regarding fire hazards before working in the store. Per [OSHA](#), they must be trained to understand:

- Individual roles and responsibilities (volunteers are not to be held responsible for controlling fire hazards, but they can be trained to recognize and report potential hazards).
- Threats, hazards and protective actions.

- Location and operation of manually activated pull stations and communication equipment.
- Emergency response procedures.
- Evacuation, shelter and accounting for staff procedures.
- Location and use of fire extinguishers and fire pulls.

STORE WALK-THROUGHS

To ensure that the Habitat ReStore is operating safely and in compliance with all OSHA guidelines, the following questions should be answered on a routine basis (at least monthly):

- ☐ Does the store have an overhead sprinkler system or alternative means of extinguishing a fire quickly?
- ☐ Does the store have an audible alarm system (PA, bullhorn, alarm, fire pulls) alerting everyone to a fire?
- ☐ Is there a designated person in charge of calling 911?
- ☐ Are the fire extinguishers placed in such a manner that no matter where a person is standing in the building, they are within 75 feet of one?
- ☐ Are the fire extinguishers inspected and maintained on a yearly basis by an outside company? Are they checked and signed off by a member of the staff monthly? Are they mounted on the wall, and are the surrounding 3 feet clear of obstructions?
- ☐ Have all staff members and volunteers been trained on proper use of the extinguishers?
- ☐ Have there been two annual fire drills where everyone was successfully evacuated to the safe gathering area?
- ☐ Are evacuation floor plan maps posted in conspicuous areas of the facility?

FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT

If the requirements for fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems are not known, the local fire department or code enforcement agency should be able to provide local guidelines since fire suppression systems should have been required before a certificate of occupancy was granted. Contracting with an external company to provide the installation, maintenance and testing of these vital pieces of equipment is strongly recommended.

MATERIAL HANDLING AND STORAGE

- Safety Data Sheets, or SDS, on all hazardous chemicals used or sold in the Habitat ReStore are required.
- Follow all OSHA guidance regarding material handling and storage as it pertains to the facility and fire prevention.

FIRE DRILLS

A fire drill is a great opportunity to be sure that staff members and volunteers have been properly trained to understand and execute evacuation procedures in the event of a real emergency. Note: Volunteers should not be responsible for evacuating anyone other than themselves.

It is recommended that every staff member and volunteer participate in a fire drill at least twice a year. Be sure to debrief after a fire drill so that any mistakes are addressed and the process can be improved.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should be aware of the available training and resources for personal and medical safety, but they are not obligated to manage safety regulations or compliance. Volunteers should be empowered to understand and control their own safety and can assist with evacuations only if they are trained and available and feel comfortable with the task. In addition, volunteers:

- Must be trained on the location of all exits in case of fire or evacuation.
- Should understand who is responsible for the execution of the fire prevention plan and whom to contact with questions.

- Should be trained on how to assist in identifying potential fire risks inside the store in order to report any areas of concern to the staff.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Contact the local fire department and/or code enforcement to ensure understanding of and compliance with local requirements for fire suppression equipment (fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems).
 - Develop training for all staff members and volunteers.
 - Develop checklists for store walk-throughs.
- It is recommended that the staff or store management check the facility before opening, verifying that fire extinguishers are in place and that aisles and exits are free from obstructions.
- Establish walk-through checklists to review fire safety precautions in more detail.
- Provide a training refresher for staff members and volunteers during team meetings (occurring at least monthly).
- Hold and document at least two fire drills per year.
- Review any contracted maintenance (e.g., sprinklers, fire extinguishers) annually to verify that they remain in compliance with local regulations and are in working order.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Know how to recognize, report and control fire hazards using a fire prevention plan.
- Know how to complete checklists, and know signs and tips on how to be aware.
- Know what to do when the alarm goes off; plan a fire drill.
- Staff members and volunteers will:
 - Complete all required training upon onboarding (staff members) or initial engagement (volunteers).
 - Work safely to limit the risk of a fire.
 - Report potential fire hazards to the designated management.
 - Follow fire emergency procedures.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.157](#).
- OSHA requirements for portable fire extinguishers.
- Inspection, maintenance and testing of portable fire extinguishers.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA's requirements](#) pertaining to fire extinguishers.
- ☐ [Provide, mount, locate and identify](#) OSHA-compliant portable fire extinguishers on site.
- ☐ [Establish and maintain](#) monthly and annual schedules for inspection, maintenance and testing of portable fire extinguishers.
- ☐ [Train Habitat ReStore staff members and volunteers](#) on the location and proper use of portable fire extinguishers.

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.

III. FACILITIES AND THE HABITAT RESTORE PHYSICAL SPACE

Fire extinguishers

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Affiliates should strive to prevent fires from happening in Habitat ReStore facilities, and everyone working in the facility should be prepared if one occurs. Along with the emergency action plan and the fire protection plan, quick access to fire suppression devices can save lives. Routinely inspected and well-maintained OSHA-compliant portable fire extinguishers are required in all stores (unless other approved fire suppression systems exist) ([OSHA 1910.157](#)).

OSHA REQUIREMENTS

The following OSHA guidance on portable fire extinguishers applies to all Habitat ReStores (note that this list is not exhaustive; affiliate and store management should become familiar with all related federal, state and local regulations):

- The affiliate must provide fire extinguishers and [mount, locate and identify them](#) within the store facility (i.e., with signage) so that they are readily accessible to staff members and volunteers.
- Fire extinguishers must be placed so that they can be reached within 75 feet of any point in the facility ([OSHA 1910.157\(c\)\(1\)](#)).
- Any portable fire extinguishers provided for use must meet OSHA requirements ([OSHA 1910.157\(d\)\(3-6\)](#)).
- Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided for employee use, or uniformly spaced standpipe systems or hose stations shall be connected to a sprinkler system, and it must be verified that the types of extinguishers made available conform to requirements set forth by OSHA and by local regulatory agencies ([OSHA 1910.157\(d\)\(1\)](#)).
 - Note that other equipment used in store operations (including vehicles, forklifts, etc.) may require additional or different types of extinguishers. Refer to the manufacturers' recommendations to ensure proper fire suppression devices are available.
- **Affiliate and store management must ensure** that all portable fire extinguishers are fully charged, operable, and kept in their designated place at all times except during use ([OSHA 1910.157](#)).
- All [nonapproved types](#) of fire extinguishers must be removed from service.

INSPECTION, MAINTENANCE AND TESTING

The affiliate is responsible for ensuring the appropriate inspection, maintenance and testing schedules are followed for their specific portable fire extinguishers. If the affiliate selects an [approved alternative to portable fire extinguishers](#), it must be aware of and ensure compliance with the appropriate inspection, maintenance and testing schedule.

All portable fire extinguishers are required to undergo **monthly** and **annual** maintenance checks. Management staff must record the maintenance date and retain the record for one year after the last entry (**OSHA 1910.157(e)**). Affiliates are strongly advised to contract with an external service provider for the maintenance, inspection and testing of fire extinguishers. Note that local fire departments are often good resources for questions regarding fire extinguishers and monthly/annual testing.

TRAINING

Affiliate and/or store management teams must provide training for staff members and volunteers on the proper use of fire extinguishers and the hazards involved. This training must be provided upon onboarding (for staff members) or initial engagement (for volunteers) and at least annually thereafter (**OSHA 1910.157(g)**). Additionally, the training should be addressed with all staff members and volunteers anytime the location or route to access any fire extinguisher changes.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should be trained on proper fire extinguisher usage to manage their own safety and potentially assist staff members if a fire occurs. Volunteers must not be held responsible for managing safety regulations or compliance.

- Volunteers can be trained on fire extinguishers but cannot be held responsible for extinguishing a fire.
- Volunteers cannot be responsible for inspecting or maintaining fire extinguishers.
- Volunteers can assist in keeping areas around fire extinguishers clear and unobstructed.
- Volunteers should take part in any fire drills.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Select and distribute OSHA-compliant portable fire extinguishers on site.
 - Train existing staff members and volunteers on the location and proper use of portable fire extinguishers.
 - Establish a schedule for the inspection, maintenance and testing of portable fire extinguishers.
- Train staff members and volunteers on the location and proper use of portable fire extinguishers upon onboarding or initial engagement and thereafter as needed (annually at a minimum).
- Ensure that all portable fire extinguishers receive a maintenance inspection monthly and annually.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Location and proper use of portable fire extinguishers.
- Hazards associated with incipient stage firefighting.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.1200](#).
- Creating and using a [Hazard Communication Plan](#).
- Information on the proper use of safety data sheets, or [SDS](#).
- Step-by-step recommendations for handling spills.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA requirements](#).
- ☐ Prepare and implement a hazard communication plan, including a [safety data sheet](#) binder.
- ☐ Ensure that all hazardous chemicals in the store are properly labeled, tagged or marked with the identity of the material and appropriate hazard. ([OSHA 1910.1200\(b\)\(1\)](#))
- ☐ Establish a training process for staff members and volunteers that includes additional training when new chemicals are introduced.
- ☐ Establish procedures and provide appropriate resources for containing hazardous spills.

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.

III. FACILITIES AND THE HABITAT RESTORE PHYSICAL SPACE

Hazardous communication and SDS

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Every Habitat ReStore should have a procedure for handling chemicals that are not deemed fit for use or resale. The regulations related to disposal of such materials vary significantly by location (Environmental Protection Agency guidance can be found [here](#)). Staff members should contact the local department of waste management to receive guidance on developing a disposal plan.

OSHA's [Hazard Communication Standard](#), or HCS, requires chemical manufacturers, distributors and importers to provide safety data sheets to communicate the hazards of chemical products. In the Habitat ReStore, OSHA requires a binder or other method (e.g., online portal) to keep safety data sheets on file for every hazardous chemical that resides (for cleaning or for sale) in the store. Affiliate and/or store management teams must be diligent in ensuring that SDS forms are printed and stored in the binder before any chemicals are taken to the floor for sale or used for cleaning purposes ([OSHA 1910.1200\(a\)\(2\)](#)).

All hazardous chemicals in the workplace must have manufacturer's labels and an SDS for staff members or volunteers who may be exposed. Staff members and volunteers should be provided with training on how to handle the chemicals appropriately. Customers have the right to request an SDS at any time.

HAZARD COMMUNICATION PLAN AND SAFETY DATA SHEET BINDER

The SDS binder ([OSHA 1910.1200\(a\)\(2\)](#)) is part of a written hazard communication plan that includes but is not limited to the following:

- All hazardous chemicals in the facility have been identified.
- All chemicals contain labels and appropriate hazard warnings.
- SDS is on file for each of the chemicals.
- Staff members and volunteers have received information and training on any hazardous chemical to which they may be exposed.

Unless an electronic process is in place, store management should create a binder to be kept in a designated area where it is accessible to staff members and volunteers (front register, donation area, manager's office, etc.). Every hazardous chemical in the facility, whether on the sales floor, in storage, or in use in personnel-only areas, must have an SDS on file ([OSHA 1910.1200\(g\)\(1\)](#)).

The SDS binder must include a written communication that contains an exhaustive list of all hazardous materials in the store, ensures that all chemicals have manufacturer's labels that have not been removed or defaced, and includes the corresponding SDS for each listed hazardous chemical ([OSHA 1910.1200\(e\)\(1\)](#)).

An explanation of the sections found on a standard SDS can be found [here](#). Safety data sheets for individual products can often be found via the manufacturer's website.

TRAINING

Designated affiliate or store staff members should provide training on the location and use of the SDS binder to all staff members and volunteers. All people working in the facility should be trained on methods and observations used to detect the presence of hazardous chemicals in the work area (visuals, odors, etc.) and measures that can be taken to protect themselves and others from these hazards. A training should be initiated anytime a new hazardous chemical is purchased or donated.

CHEMICAL SPILLS

In the event of a spill:

- In the Habitat ReStore, all chemical spills should be considered hazardous.
- First response should be:
 - Identify what has spilled.
 - Review the SDS for proper cleanup procedures, avoiding possible physical reactions by employing personal protective equipment.
- If the spill is biological (blood), having a bloodborne pathogen spill kit can be very effective. This kit is different from many OSHA spill kits and is specifically designed to handle blood and protect the person cleaning the spill ([OSHA 1910.1030](#)).
- All chemical spills of an unknown nature will require blocking off the area from shoppers, donors, volunteers and staff members until the degree of risk can be determined.
- Whenever a spill occurs, only trained and qualified people should clean it up. Verify via the SDS form if the fire department or other agency should be called to assist in the cleanup.
- Never clean up a spill alone or without personal protective equipment; the chemical might cause a physical reaction.
- Visit the EPA website for directions on properly disposing of all chemicals: epa.gov/hw/household-hazardous-waste-hhw.
- To better prepare for an incident, create and maintain a spill kit containing the following (note that this list is not exhaustive and that each Habitat ReStore should determine the type and extent of items included in its individual spill kits based on the types of hazardous chemicals housed in the facility):
 - Safety gloves (nitrile).
 - Eye goggles.
 - Shoe covers.
 - Absorbent pads or powder (before using, verify that it can be used on the specific spill).
 - Disposal bags, small broom and dust pan.
 - Dust masks. (Respirators should not be included in the kit unless a thorough review of all applicable OSHA regulations has been followed. See the [OSHA respiratory protection standard](#).)
- All spills should be appropriately documented after the incident is reported, and documents should be kept on file as a near-miss incident if no injury has occurred.

IN-STORE TIPS

To best ensure compliance with OSHA and EPA regulations, affiliate and store management should strongly consider limiting the number of chemicals that are sold and used. It's helpful to address the two channels in which stores receive chemicals: those purchased to be used in cleaning and maintaining the facility, and those that are resold to the public.

1. Keeping the Habitat ReStore clean is an important, ongoing task. Rather than relying on unpredictable donated goods, select a limited number of effective multipurpose cleaners that are purchased and reordered as needed. These familiar, purchased items should be the only chemicals used to clean the facility.
2. Donated chemicals should be resold only if they are unopened and contain the original labeling from the manufacturer. As with all donated products, err on the side of caution. If there is any doubt to the origin or authenticity of a chemical, it should be assumed that the chemical should not be used or sold.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must be trained on any hazardous chemicals that they may be exposed to so that they can be empowered to support their personal safety measures and the safety of other individuals in the facility. However, they should not be held responsible for managing safety regulations and compliance. Additionally, volunteers:

- Are not required to handle, clean up or be exposed to any hazardous chemical, but should be trained and empowered to report any spills or incidents involving hazardous chemicals to the staff.
- Should be aware of any personal protective equipment needed if they are exposed to hazardous chemicals.
- Should be aware of where to locate safety data sheets.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Identify all hazardous chemicals in the store and ensure all labels are present.
 - Obtain SDS sheets for all hazardous chemicals in the facility.
 - Create an SDS binder.
 - Create spill kits and establish procedures for handling spills.
 - Train all current staff members and volunteers on the location and use of the SDS binder and the proper way to handle spills.
- Anytime a new hazardous chemical is introduced, add it to the SDS binder and provide training to staff members and volunteers.
- Train staff members (upon onboarding) and volunteers (upon initial engagement) on the location and proper use of the SDS binder and the proper way to handle spills.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Location and proper use of the SDS binder.
- How to identify the presence of a hazardous chemical in the work area.
- Measures that can be taken for protection of hazardous chemicals.
- What to do in the event of a spill.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to [OSHA 1910.141](#).
- OSHA requirements for general housekeeping.
- OSHA requirements for potable water and toilet facilities.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with [OSHA requirements pertaining to potable water and toilet facilities](#).
- ☐ Create general housekeeping practices that maintain a clean environment.
- ☐ Ensure that the facility's water supply, cleaning areas and restrooms meet both OSHA and local requirements.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

III. FACILITIES AND THE HABITAT RESTORE PHYSICAL SPACE

General housekeeping

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

The first impression of the Habitat ReStore can have a positive or negative impact on how the Habitat organization is perceived. Ensuring that the entire facility — not just the retail space — is clean, safe, accessible and OSHA-compliant is key to creating a positive impression.

GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING

A clean and well-organized store helps to create a safe environment and pleasant experience for shoppers, donors, volunteers and staff members. [OSHA 1910.141\(a\)](#) contains (but is not limited to) the following requirements:

- All areas of the Habitat ReStore facility must be kept clean to the extent that the nature of the work allows.
- The floor must be kept dry, and passageways must be kept clear.
- Waste receptacles must not leak, and trash must be removed or disposed of for sanitation purposes.
- The workplace must be constructed, equipped and maintained, so far as reasonably practicable, to prevent the entrance or harborage of rodents, insects and other vermin. A continuing and effective extermination program shall be instituted where their presence is detected.

WATER SUPPLY AND TOILET FACILITIES

Habitat ReStore facilities should be designed with comfort and safety in mind. [OSHA 1910.141\(b\)\(1\)](#) requires that potable water be provided for drinking, washing of the person, cooking, washing of foods, washing of utensils, washing of food preparation or processing areas, and for personal service rooms. The information provided by [OSHA 1910.141\(c-d\)](#) spells out the requirements for toilet facilities in the store.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers can assist in general housekeeping, but they must be trained on any required personal protective equipment. Volunteers should not be held responsible for the cleanliness of the facility and should perform only those tasks they are comfortable with.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Add potable water access and/or additional toilet facilities (as needed).
- Continually ensure the following:
 - The store is clean, and the floors are dry.
 - Trash is removed and disposed of in a timely manner so as to not accumulate.
 - The store is maintained to deter or eliminate vermin.

- Hand soap, toilet paper and paper towels are available in restrooms, and/or air blowers are in working order.
- In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- The cleanliness of the facility can impact the perception of Habitat for Humanity.

In this chapter

- Guidance related to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, or FMCSA.
- Commercial vehicle compliance.
- Regulations that apply to drivers.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Review, understand and ensure compliance with FMCSA regulations.
- ☐ Ensure that Habitat ReStore drivers (commonly called “donation ambassadors”) are properly trained, equipped and licensed to safely operate a commercial vehicle.
- ☐ Determine your need for operators with a commercial driver’s license, or CDL, vs. a noncommercial license.
- ☐ Create truck inspection and equipment checklists and implement daily verification processes.
- ☐ Understand the rules of the road and ensure compliance with all Department of Transportation and FMCSA regulations, including any additional state regulations.

Note: *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.*

IV. HABITAT RESTORE VEHICLES

Fleet safety

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Providing a pickup service for donors gives Habitat ReStores an important advantage over their competitors and is commonly a source of high-value donations. As such, it is important that stores properly maintain and operate their vehicles in compliance with Department of Transportation and state regulations and that they ensure that the paid staff members who operate the vehicles have the proper training, supervision and licensures/certifications in place to do so safely.

Multiple agencies provide guidance pertaining to fleet management and driving staff. This chapter will address federal guidance from the DOT and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, along with information from Lockton Affinity (for those affiliates in the Lockton Affinity insurance program). Any affiliate using a different provider should get additional guidance directly from that provider.

DRIVING STAFF

The affiliate is responsible for establishing pre-employment requirements for any staff member who will operate a vehicle and for verifying that all drivers meet those guidelines. The affiliate should design these guidelines in partnership with its insurance provider and a local HR professional to ensure compliance with the affiliate’s insurance policy and with the law.

Affiliate and/or store management should maintain an active file of people indicated as drivers, including a copy of their personal driver’s license and motor vehicle record. Affiliate and/or store leaders can request a motor vehicle report from the Department of Motor Vehicles at any time (check all state requirements).

Affiliate and/or store management must partner with their insurance carrier for driver requirements and insurance coverage.

The Department of Transportation has provided pre-employment guidelines that include:

- Minimum age requirements.
- Licensure requirements.
- The maximum number and type of moving violations (over a specific period) that would not disqualify an applicant.
 - Example: “Must have no more than three Type B moving violations in the last three years.”
- Amount and type of previous experience required.
- The minimum period over which the applicant has not had a license suspension and/or revocation.
 - Example: “Have no license suspension or revocation in the last three years.”
- The maximum number of incidents in which an applicant could have been involved (over a specific period) that will not disqualify them from employment.
 - Example: “Have no more than a total of three incidents (regardless of fault) in the last three years.”

- Note that if the driver is a new hire to this type of job, training must be provided and documented to ensure they are prepared to drive the specialized vehicle.

POLICY

Affiliate and/or store management should create and implement a policy that requires, at a minimum, driving screens on all drivers before engagement and for all vehicle operators to immediately report changes to their driving records that could impact their eligibility to operate vehicles (e.g., a DUI citation). Also recommended is a policy that requires national criminal and sex offender database checks, if allowed under local law, especially if the drivers will be entering homes.

Before adding any policy, verify its legality with a local HR professional. It is the responsibility of each affiliate to understand and implement all DOT (both intrastate and interstate) and FMCSA regulations and state requirements that apply to driver licensing qualifications to operate a commercial vehicle.

OPERATOR CDL REQUIREMENTS

Any commercial vehicle with a gross vehicle weight exceeding 26,001 pounds may be operated only by a person who holds a commercial driver's license, or CDL. If this applies to any vehicle operated by the organization, seek further information on licensure and operating requirements [here](#). Affiliate and/or store management should connect with their insurance carrier for any clarification on who is approved to operate the vehicle.

NON-CDL REQUIREMENTS⁶

Drivers operating a commercial vehicle with a gross vehicle weight below 26,001 pounds may not be required to be in possession of a commercial driver's license provided that they:

- Travel within a 150-mile radius on a daily basis.
- Depart from and report back to a central location, with time in and out recorded on a timecard (this timekeeping may relieve the driver of keeping a logbook).
- Have 10 consecutive hours off duty from driving per day.
- Do not exceed a maximum of 11 hours of drive time per day.

If a driver is not required to have a CDL but the truck being operated has a gross vehicle weight that exceeds 10,001 pounds, the driver must obtain a current DOT medical exam before operating the vehicle ([Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#)). The medical exam form may be downloaded [here](#).

Additional training for drivers can be found via Lockton's Habitat [ReStore landing page](#). Click on "Online Safety Training Courses," note the access code, click on "Take Training Course Now," and enter the access code where required. From there, select the appropriate "Defensive Driving" options. This training may be taken in addition to any required federal or state training before operating a vehicle. Ensure that all applicable DOT requirements are followed within state and federal guidelines.

VEHICLE EQUIPMENT AND INSPECTIONS

A properly inspected, maintained and equipped truck is not only more cost- and time-efficient, but it also mitigates a number of risks inherent in operating a large vehicle on public roads.

The Department of Transportation has outlined both mandatory and suggested equipment to be stored on commercial vehicles.

Mandatory equipment:

- [Fire extinguishers](#). If the truck is NOT being used to transport hazardous materials, it must be equipped with one of the following:

⁶ These are general safety rules according to the DOT for non-CDL operation. For additional information regarding trucks with a gross vehicle weight exceeding 26,001 pounds, visit the [DOT website](#).

- A fire extinguisher having an Underwriters' Laboratories rating of 5 B:C or more.
- Two fire extinguishers, each of which has an Underwriters' Laboratories rating of 4 B:C or more.
- Spare fuses
 - At least one spare for each type/size needed to operate the required parts and accessories.
- Warning devices for stopped vehicles (one of the following):
 - Three bidirectional, [emergency](#) reflective triangles that conform to the requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 125, [§571.125](#).
 - At least six fuses or three liquid-burning flares. The vehicle must have as many additional fuses or liquid-burning flares as are necessary to satisfy the requirements of [§392.22](#).
 - Other warning devices may be used in addition to, but not in lieu of, the required warning devices, provided those warning devices do not decrease the effectiveness of the required warning devices.
- Use of hazard warning signal flashers: Whenever a commercial motor vehicle is stopped upon the traveled portion of a highway or the shoulder of a highway for any cause other than necessary traffic stops, the driver of the stopped commercial motor vehicle shall immediately activate the vehicular hazard warning signal flashers and continue the flashing until the driver places the required warning devices.
- Individual states may have additional requirements. You can find each state's transportation website [here](#).

Additional recommended equipment:

- First-aid kit.⁷
- Waterproof flashlight.
- Additional spare fuses.
- Flares.
- Gloves.
- Wheel chocks.
- Ratchet straps.
- Packing blankets.
- Pallet jack(s) (as needed).
- Hand trucks.
- Twine.
- Bungee cords.
- Tool box (with basic tools) and emergency cell phone.
- Pretrip (not written) and post-trip (written) inspection checklists completed and filed at the ReStore.
- DOT registration card (if required), DOT medical card, truck insurance card, and visible DOT registration number on outside of truck (if required by the state).
- Blank [incident reports](#), blank [witness reports](#), and a copy of the [third-party incident procedures](#) (in case of vehicle accident or damage to a donor's home and/or property).
- Step-by-step guidance for drivers in the event they are involved in an accident, including emergency contact numbers.

MANDATORY DOT REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Transportation has outlined both mandatory and suggested inspections and reporting pertaining to commercial vehicles ([§396.11, Driver vehicle inspection reports](#)).

Pretrip

The pretrip visual inspection ensures that the vehicle is safe to operate before it is put into service for the day and serves to verify the previous day's written report of any defects.

Before operating the ReStore vehicle, the driver shall perform a visual inspection and:

⁷ Always verify requirements with each state's guidelines, as a kit is mandatory in some states.

- Be satisfied that the motor vehicle is in safe operating condition.
- Review the last driver vehicle inspection report and sign the report.

Post-trip

The affiliate and store leaders shall require their drivers to report, and every driver shall prepare a report in writing at the completion of each day's work on each vehicle operated. The report shall cover, at a minimum, the following parts and accessories:

- Service brakes⁸
- Parking brake
- Steering mechanism
- Lighting devices
- Reflectors
- Tires
- Fluids
- Horn
- Windshield wipers
- Rear vision mirrors
- Coupling devices
- Wheels and rims
- Emergency equipment

Report content:

- Must identify the vehicle and list any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to the driver that would affect the safe operation of the vehicle or result in its mechanical breakdown. If a driver operates more than one vehicle during the day, a report must be prepared for each vehicle operated.
- The driver must sign the report. On two-driver operations, only one driver needs to sign the driver vehicle inspection report.
- Affiliate and/or store management must maintain driver vehicle inspection reports, certifications of repairs, and the certification of the driver's review for three months (90 days) from the date the written report was prepared.

Corrective action

- Before requiring or permitting a driver to operate a vehicle, the affiliate or store management shall repair any defect or deficiency listed on the driver vehicle inspection report that would be likely to affect the safe operation of the vehicle.
- Affiliate and/or ReStore management shall certify on the driver vehicle inspection report, which lists any defect or deficiency, that the defect or deficiency has been repaired or that repair is unnecessary before the vehicle is operated again.

Additional DOT requirements

- Check with individual states' requirements for transport of out-of-the-ordinary donation items (e.g., hazardous materials), as a CDL and applicable placards/endorsements may be required. Each state's transportation website can be found [here](#).
- If a vehicle travels over state lines (interstate travel), ensure that DOT regulations for both states are followed.
- Weigh stations: Always check individual state DOT requirements for weigh stations (AAA provides a convenient resource [here](#)). In most states, any commercial vehicle with a gross vehicle weight that exceeds 10,000 pounds must stop at any weigh station for inspection (this also applies to rental trucks).
- Use this [simple tool provided by the FMCSA](#) to determine whether a truck is required to have a DOT registration number. Any commercial vehicle that travels across state lines may need to be registered with both states.

⁸ Including trailer brake connections.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should not perform the function of a driver in the ReStore vehicle, but if they are older than 18 and have passed all required background/sex offender checks, they may assist the driver or donation team with pickups, loading or donation acquisitions. Court-ordered community service volunteers are not allowed on the truck or in donors' homes.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Identify all legal licensing requirements for operating the donation vehicles.
 - Verify that all current and incoming vehicle operators meet DOT requirements to operate a commercial vehicle.
 - Create a checklist to identify the supplies and equipment that should be on the trucks to meet DOT regulations and for safe operation.
 - Establish pretrip and post-trip inspection procedures, documentation and reporting.
 - Establish a regular vehicle maintenance schedule with a certified mechanic.
 - Check with your insurance carrier for driver requirements and insurance coverage.
- Driving staff should perform the following daily tasks:
 - Pre-inspection visual check.
 - Post-inspection written report.
 - Verification of equipment onboard.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Equipping the truck: What is mandatory, and what is recommended.
- Proper use of emergency signals.
- How to complete daily inspection checks, both pre- and post-trip.
- DOT requirements.
- Volunteers may not operate a ReStore vehicle.
- Weigh station requirements by state.

In this chapter

- Guidance on safely picking up donations inside of a donor's home.
- Recommendations for equipment that should be kept on the donation pickup vehicle.

Requirements and recommendations

- ☐ Establish and communicate a policy on requirements for donation pickups.
- ☐ Establish and implement procedures for safely picking up items in donors' homes.
- ☐ Properly equip the donation pickup vehicle for safely moving and securing donations.
- ☐ Establish procedures in the event that damage occurs. Refer to [Lockton accident procedures](#).

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of federal, state and local regulations. Please work with your local governance and regulatory agencies to determine individual state and city compliance.

IV. HABITAT RESTORE VEHICLES

Preventing damage and injury in donor homes

Practical guidance

INTRODUCTION

Most Habitat ReStores have a donation pickup service, which provides the organization with a competitive advantage over other donation-supported thrift and resale operations. This service also comes with risks, and it is important that steps are taken to prevent both damage to donors' homes and injuries to donation pickup teams. If volunteers are assisting the pickup staff, they must be properly screened and trained before entering a donor's home. Just a reminder that community service volunteers are not allowed to be on the Habitat ReStore truck or to enter a donor's home.

POLICY

Habitat ReStores should have an internal policy that indicates the requirements that must be met by the donor in order for the store to be able to safely pick up items in a donor's home. Ideally, the donor will have all merchandise in a driveway or garage, but in some circumstances that might not be possible.

The following example language could be used in such a policy:

- *The item(s) must be on the first floor and easily accessible, or in a walk-out basement and easily accessible. The Habitat ReStore donation pickup service is unable to move items up or down stairways or through hallways. If the donor is unable to accommodate these requirements (or the circumstances are deemed unsafe), you may:*
 - *Offer to reschedule the donation, giving the donor more time to relocate the item into a more accessible space.*
 - *Politely decline the donation, indicating to the donor that doing so is to ensure the safety of Habitat staff members and to protect their home from potential damage.*
 - *Accept the donation but hire a reputable, vetted third-party moving service to pick up the donation on Habitat's behalf. In this case, the pickup service would be outsourced to a professional moving service. No third-party service should be used until it has provided proof of appropriate licensures, insurance and references.*

When donation pickups are scheduled, donors should be informed that drivers retain the right to decline a donation if it's determined that the items cannot be safely moved.

If drivers encounter any of these situations, they should explain to the donor that the product cannot be moved safely and therefore other arrangements will need to be made to have the donation moved to the driveway or garage in order for it to be picked up.

EQUIPPING TRUCKS

Trucks should be prepared with the following equipment for moving donations:

- Hand trucks, pallet jacks, appliance dollies, furniture dollies
- Moving blankets
- Small tool box for disassembly of donated items
- Ratchet tie-downs and bungee cords
- Shrink wrap
- Box tape to secure boxes
- Twine
- Nonslip shoe covers for entering homes

MOVING ITEMS IN A DONOR'S HOME

Once it has been determined that the donation can be safely moved, the following steps should be taken:

- Staff members should protect the donor's floor with a rollout carpet/flooring protector.
- Before the process of moving items begins, staff members should identify the specific path by which they will exit the home. If items are blocking the egress or are in the path and could be damaged (e.g., a side table, pictures on the walls, etc.), the staff members should ask the donor's permission to relocate those items while the donations are being moved.
- The method for moving each item should be identified and verbally communicated among staff members.
- After items have been moved out of the home, they should be lifted onto the box truck using a lift gate or a ramp.
- Once an item is on the truck, it should be properly padded with moving blankets and secured in the truck with ratchet straps and/or bungee cords.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

If property damage occurs:

- Immediately notify the homeowner and affiliate and/or store management.
- Take photos of damaged areas or items.
- Fill out an [incident report](#) and collect [witness statements](#) upon returning to the affiliate and/or store facility.

IN-STORE TIPS

A quick way for donation drivers and truck assistants to determine whether items can be safely moved in a donor's home is to go through these questions:

- Is the item too heavy to move safely?
- Is the passageway able to accommodate moving the item without risking damage?
- Is the path to the truck safely and easily navigated (wet grass, mud or any other slippery surface) without the potential for injury?
- Will doors have to be removed by the homeowner to transport a donation out of the home?
- Does moving the item create the potential for scratches, scrapes or tears to flooring or walls?
- Can the truck safely navigate the driveway without damaging the property or vehicle?

VOLUNTEERS

Habitat ReStore volunteers should be aware of the rules and regulations surrounding donation pickups, but they are not obligated to manage the pickup process at donor homes. Volunteers should be empowered to understand and control their own personal safety at a donor's home and can assist with pickups only if they are trained, all applicable background checks have been performed, and they feel comfortable with the task.

- Volunteers should be trained on the potential risks to personal safety while removing products from donor homes and on the potential for damage to the home or property.
- Volunteers should not be held responsible for accepting or denying donations. Volunteers should defer to the Habitat ReStore driving staff on any communication regarding the donation with the donor.
- Community service volunteers are not allowed to ride on the pickup vehicle, nor to enter a donor's home at any time.

Suggested activities

- Program setup:
 - Establish and communicate donation pickup policies and procedures with all staff members and volunteers who may participate in donation pickups from time to time.
 - Ensure that the truck is properly equipped with all necessary items to safely move and transport donations.
- Continually ensure the following:
 - Staff members who participate in donation pickups are trained on all pickup policies and procedures.
 - Staff members who schedule pickups and who participate in pickups are familiar with guidance on donation safety.

In addition to the guidance outlined in this manual, affiliate and store management are both responsible for understanding and carrying out the requirements provided by federal, state and local laws.

Takeaway concepts

- Good policies and procedures can prevent damage to donors' homes and injuries to staff members.
- Move donations only when it is safe to do so, thereby avoiding damage to the donation and/or the donors' home or property.

Notes

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