



## Demolition

Common hazards to demolition workers include lead-based paint, sharp or protruding objects, crystalline silica and asbestos.

### Steps to Avoid Hazards

- Planning should include things like site control and hazard assessments for lead, asbestos, and silica.
- Before starting demolition work, plan adequately to protect employee health and safety.
- Brace or shore up walls and floors of damaged structures before workers enter the area.
- Inspect and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the task – including gloves, hard hat, high visibility outer wear, safety toed boots and appropriate respiratory protection.
- Check all stairs, passageways, stairways and ladders.
- Shut off or cap all utility service lines and alert utility companies.
- Guard wall openings to a height of 42 inches. Cover and secure floor openings with material that will withstand loads likely to be placed on them.
- Floor openings used for material disposal must measure 25% or less than total floor area.
- Use enclosed chutes with gates on the discharge end to drop demolition material to the ground or into debris containers.
- Start demolition of exterior walls and floors at the top of the structure and work downward.
- Structural or load-bearing columns on any floor must not be cut or removed until all stories above have been removed.
- All roof cornices or other ornamental stonework must be removed prior to pulling walls down.
- Structural collapse hazards must be shored up, braced or supported by other means before workers are permitted to enter area.
- Wash hands and face after work and before eating. Do not wear PPE while eating.
- If exposed to lead or asbestos at the worksite, be alert to symptoms of exposure, including severe abdominal pain, headaches, loss of motor coordination and difficulty breathing.

## Hidden Hazards of Structural Design

Ensure all demolition personnel are aware of these potential hazards and safety precautions to control them:

- Design changes introduced during construction
- Modifications made to original design
- Materials hidden within structural elements
- Unknown strengths/weaknesses of construction materials

Source: OSHA

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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