

Job Name _____ Job # _____ Date 8/15/19

Toolbox Talk: The Dangers of Drywall Stacks

Right before the first drywall sheet is hung, there is a brief time window when framing is complete, mechanicals are in place and every outlet and wire is in full view. Contractors, customers, inspectors and architects along with various trade and service professionals, can be found at the project site. They come to measure, inspect, approve and verify that no detail is overlooked before the walls are obscured by drywall. And this is also the time when jobs are typically stocked with drywall.

Stocking methods vary by structure, floor plan, job circumstance, geography and local custom. The merits of laying sheets flat vs. placing sheets upright has been debated for years with no consensus between parties who manufacture, distribute and install drywall. One faction believes drywall should always be laid flat while the other insists there is an unnecessary ergonomic impact for workers who deliver and install drywall. When stockers are required to place sheets on the floor and installers must then lift sheets off the floor, the repetitive action can take a physical toll on the musculoskeletal system.

In a perfect world, all drywall deliveries would be made with a level site, easy access and all work done by hydraulic equipment—but this is not the real world of construction. One fact that is not in dispute, drywall is delivered and placed upright on jobs all across North America every work day. How do we warn and protect people who come in contact with upright drywall stacks and who have no knowledge of the potential harm they may encounter?

While you may know how to safely handle and store drywall, never assume another person knows what you know.

Another cause of drywall accidents occurs when people who do not understand the weight of drywall pull it forward to check for an outlet or wire. Drywall sheets placed on edge should always be secured against tipping and with a restraint method that can be easily reapplied. The stack should also be labeled with a warning or caution sign that states the potential danger of attempting to move heavy drywall sheets. There are multiple benefits of stocking drywall upright. However, significant hazards can be created with this process if precautions are not taken. Incidental or accidental drywall stack tip over can result in life changing injuries or death.

In order to keep customers, tradespeople and visitors safe from the hazard of falling drywall, more national, regional and local builders have begun to require edge stacked drywall to be secured as part of the subcontractor scope of work. Gypsum board, plywood, trusses, and similar material shall not be stacked on edge unless positively secured against tipping or falling.

Please be sure to sign your name to the training certification form.

