



# SAFETY HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS

This handbook is intended to provide you with a general orientation to volunteering with HFHWM and a basic understanding of our policies. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook as it will answer questions related to your volunteer work with HFHWM.

This handbook cannot anticipate every situation. HFHWM reserves the right to change, add to, or eliminate policies described in this handbook at any time and without notice.

Note: From here on, Habitat for Humanity of Williamson and Maury Counties will be referred to as HFHWM.

***“Everyone deserves  
a decent place  
to call home.”***

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For emergencies call 911

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## **Volunteer Responsibility**

I am volunteering to work at the HFHWM worksite, ReStore or offices at my own risk after reading the HFHWM Safety Handbook. If for any reason I believe that my working at the HFHWM worksite, ReStore, or offices might endanger me or others, I must immediately report this to the Director of Construction and Land Development or Construction Site Manager immediately at the worksite, the ReStore Manager at the ReStore or the Office Manager at the HFHWM offices.

This might include, among other things, communicable diseases, physical impairments and medication (prescription and otherwise that might impair my judgment).

If I encounter an injured person at the worksite, ReStore, or HFHWM offices, I should not attempt to provide medical attention to the person unless I am trained and certified.

If I encounter an injured person at the worksite, I will notify the Director of Construction and Land Development or Construction Site Manager at the worksite immediately.

If I encounter an injured person at the ReStore, I will notify the ReStore Manager immediately.

If I encounter an injured person at the HFHWM offices, I will notify the Office Manager immediately.

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**Contacts**

**Director of Construction**

Tasha Towry (615) 550-5615

**Volunteer Manager**

Rain Fisher (615) 550-5619, cell: 812-371-5760

**ReStore Manager**

Ansel Rogers's office (615) 690-8094

**Finance Manager**

Jessica Moran (615) 550-5613

**Our Mission Statement**

Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

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## **General Policies**

### **Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination**

HFHWM expects all volunteers to behave in a way that reinforces the Christian mission and founding principles of the organization. All volunteers should be accorded respect and consideration and feel that HFHWM provides a safe and productive environment. HFHWM prohibits any actions or conduct that may discriminate against or harass others.

If you feel that you have been harassed, you should notify the Office Manager of your concerns without delay. HFHWM will investigate all claims of prohibited harassment.

### **Resolving Issues with Others**

As in all workplaces, personal differences may occur among individuals. It is important for you and HFHWM that issues are not allowed to fester and detract from your important contribution to this ministry.

We believe that the quickest way to resolve the issues is to approach the individual(s) involved so that an appropriate solution can be reached. If this initial conversation does not lead to resolution or you feel uncomfortable discussing the matter with the person directly, we ask that you speak with a supervisor to resolve the matter.

### **Workplace Violence Policy**

HFHWM can best perform its mission when all associates coexist in a climate that supports a free exchange of ideas and utilizes constructive methods of conflict resolution. Habitat is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from disruptive, threatening and violent behavior.

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### **HFHWM Equipment and Property**

Please be respectful of HFHWM property, tools, and equipment. Take good care of tools and supplies so that they remain in good and safe working condition. All tools, equipment, and supplies cost money and you can help us maximize resources with ***proper usage and storage***.

### **Personal Appearance and Dress Code**

HFHWM maintains a policy of conservative attire worn in good taste and appropriate to the situation. Attire should be appropriate for the task to protect you from worksite hazards.

***Worksite and ReStores:*** All volunteers must wear work shoes, boots or sneakers. ***Sandals, flip flops, open toe and high heel shoes are unsafe and prohibited on the worksite.***

### **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

HFHWM is a Drug Free Workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of controlled substances is prohibited at all of our worksites. At no time is alcohol permitted at the HFHWM worksite, ReStores, or office.

### **Smoking**

HFHWM is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is safe and healthful. Please refrain from using tobacco products inside the ReStore, office, on worksite and while unloading trucks or during other volunteer-related tasks.

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**Every Volunteer is a Safety Leader.**

Safety is everyone's concern. Every volunteer on a HFHWM site becomes a safety leader the moment he/she arrives. An observer can often see danger better than the worker involved in the project and it is his/her obligation to speak to the worker and the supervisor. Since Habitat work crews normally have a high proportion of inexperienced people, everyone must pay particular attention to safety.

Be conscious of the safety of others as well as your own. Be cautious at all times. Safety is based on knowledge, skill and an attitude of care and concern. Ask questions; there is a supervisor on each site that can help you identify inherent hazards and instruct you on how to avoid them.

**Volunteer Crew Leaders**

Our Volunteer Crew Leaders are all skilled volunteers who work with our construction staff to train and supervise you. They will instruct you about the correct and proper procedures for performing each task. You can identify the Volunteer Crew Leaders by his/her nametag, hat or "Green Shirt."

**Safety Coordinators**

We recommend that our sponsors have one person as the designated Safety Coordinator for the worksite for each day. The Safety Coordinator should have knowledge of everything in this Safety Booklet. You can identify the Safety Coordinator by his/her orange hard hat.

The Safety Coordinator's primary responsibility is to watch for unsafe working conditions and to alert volunteers of potential risk. If the risk is site related rather than performance related, the Habitat Site Supervisor should be notified.

**Guidelines for a Safe Build**

**Be honest** about your comfort level. There is no need to be a hero on a Habitat build. If the thought of working at heights bothers you, stay off the roof, scaffolding or high ladders.

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### **Proper Safety Equipment**

**Wear appropriate clothing.** This is as important to safety as the proper selection and use of tools. Workers must wear work shoes, boots or sneakers. ***Any person wearing sandals, flip flops, open toe or high heel shoes will not be allowed to remain on the worksite.***

**Wear hard hats.** Hard hats are available onsite and must be worn at all times.

**Wear protective eyewear.** Eyewear is available onsite and must be worn at all times.

**Wear dust masks.** Dust masks are available onsite and should be worn when installing insulation or in heavy dust situations.

**Wear earplugs.** Earplugs are available onsite and should be used when subjected to loud noises for an extended period of time.

**Work gloves** are available onsite and should be worn when carrying materials.

**Think** about your task. If you are uncertain about how to accomplish your task or how to operate a tool or piece of equipment, ask a supervisor.

**Concentrate** on the task at hand. Avoid distractions.

**Inspect** all power tools, hand tools, ladders and scaffolding. If any unsafe tools or conditions come to your attention contact the supervisor immediately.

### **Power Tools and Other Electrical Devices**

**Wait for proper instruction.** Each volunteer should receive instructions before a power tool is used, including what could happen if not used correctly. A supervisor should give instructions to all volunteers, including experienced do-it-yourselfers.

**Check for defects.** Check all power tools – switches, cords and plugs. Pay special attention to blade guards to make sure they operate correctly. ***Under no circumstances should you ever disable a blade guard.*** Defective tools should not be used and



the supervisor should be notified so that they can remove the tool from service immediately.

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**Examine extension cords.** They should be of sufficient size (check with the supervisor) and in good condition. Keep cords out of mud or water and avoid stepping on them.

### **Hand Tools**

**Select the proper tool.** Make sure you are using the right tool for the job at hand and make sure it's the proper size. If you're unsure, ask the supervisor.

**Check the condition of the tool.** Avoid tools with loose handles or tools that are dull. Make sure the tools are clean. Oil or dirt on a tool can cause it to slip.

**Hold tools correctly.** A hammer should be held at the base of the handle to ensure maximum efficiency, while a knife should be held in such a manner as to allow you to cut away from your body.

**Handle and carry all tools with care.** Carry only a few tools at a time or carry them in a tool belt with special compartments. Keep sharp or pointed tools pointed away from you. Be conscious of where you lay your tools down. Never lay a hammer down on the slope of a roof or the top of a stepladder.

**Use extreme caution with a saw.** Never bind a saw blade, especially a power saw. It can result in a very dangerous bucking action that can cause serious injury. Support what you are cutting in a proper fashion to avoid kickback or to prevent a cut board from falling where it could drop on someone.

### **Ladders**

**Inspect all ladders before use.** If the ladder is unsafe, don't use it. Look for wear and tear, loose rungs and other defects.

**Use ladders of proper length.** An extension ladder should reach three feet above the work level.

**Move your ladder with your work.** Don't lean too far. If both of your shoulders are outside the ladder you are leaning too far and serious injury could occur.

**Set your ladder at the proper angle. 4:1 rule. *For every four feet of height, the bottom of the ladder should be one foot away from the wall.*** You are at the correct angle if, when you place your toes against the base of the ladder and stand erect, you can reach out and grasp the rung at shoulder height.

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**Place your ladder on solid footing.** Avoid mud or gravel. If there is a risk of the ladder slipping, tie or stake the ladder down. If the ladder is not level, dig the ground out from under the high leg rather than “block up” the other leg. Always face the ladder. Carry tools in a container so that your hands are free to climb. If you are uncomfortable with ladder placement or stability, find a supervisor or Crew Leader.

**Be cautious with aluminum ladders.** Never use an aluminum ladder near electrical lines, in inclement weather or on windy days.

## **Scaffolding**

**Use the proper scaffolding.** All scaffolding must be designed to support four times the weight of the worker and materials resting on it. Special care should be taken to ensure scaffolding components are compatible.

**Inspect scaffolding every day.** When erecting scaffolding, make sure the legs are resting on adequate sills, safety pins are in place and that the equipment is plumb and level.

**Many scaffolding accidents occur when the walk boards are inadequate or defective.** Inspect planking frequently and remove any defective or suspect pieces.

## **Clean Worksite and Tool Care**

**Maintain a clean worksite.** Keeping a neat and organized worksite contributes to efficiency and is important in preventing accidents.

**Clean up all rubbish and scrap as you go.** Do not allow wood scraps, nails or any trash to pile up. They interfere with work and can be a hazard.

**Protruding nails** from loose lumber are a hazard. Remove or flatten them before discarding.

**Keep up with tools and equipment that are not being used and return them to the tool container.** This protects the tools as well as the workers.

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### **First Aid and Emergency Care**

**HFHWM strives to have a person Red Cross certified in First Aid, CPR and AED on site at all times.** We invite all volunteers who are certified in first aid and CPR to identify themselves.

**First aid certified personnel wear Red Cross badges** and Safety Coordinators wear green cross vests. ***Most importantly, the location of the first aid kit and how to get emergency help will be explained to the group during the morning orientation.***

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

**Get help.** Notify the Safety Coordinator and HFHWM construction staff immediately.

**Get help.** If you see someone hurt, notify the Safety Coordinator and Habitat construction staff immediately. First aid kits are located at each house and at the designated first aid area.

### **Blood borne Pathogens**

**What are blood borne pathogens?** Blood borne pathogens are viruses or bacteria present in human blood and bodily fluids, which can infect and cause disease in humans. Any contact with infected blood or body fluids carries the risk of potential infection.

#### **How to protect yourself from blood borne pathogens?**

- 1. Protect yourself first... treat the victim SECOND.**
- 2. Treat all blood and body fluid spills as if they are infectious.**
- 3. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.** Most accident responses will require only gloves for adequate protection; however, other protection may include gowns, face shields, facemasks and eye protection.

4. If performing mouth to mouth resuscitation, always use a pocket mask equipped with a one-way valve to prevent contact with potentially infectious body fluids.

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***For an electronic copy of the Safety Handbook & more information  
about Habitat for Humanity of Williamson and Maury Counties:***

***[www.hfhwm.org](http://www.hfhwm.org)***

***On-line version of the Safety Handbook supersedes any printed version***