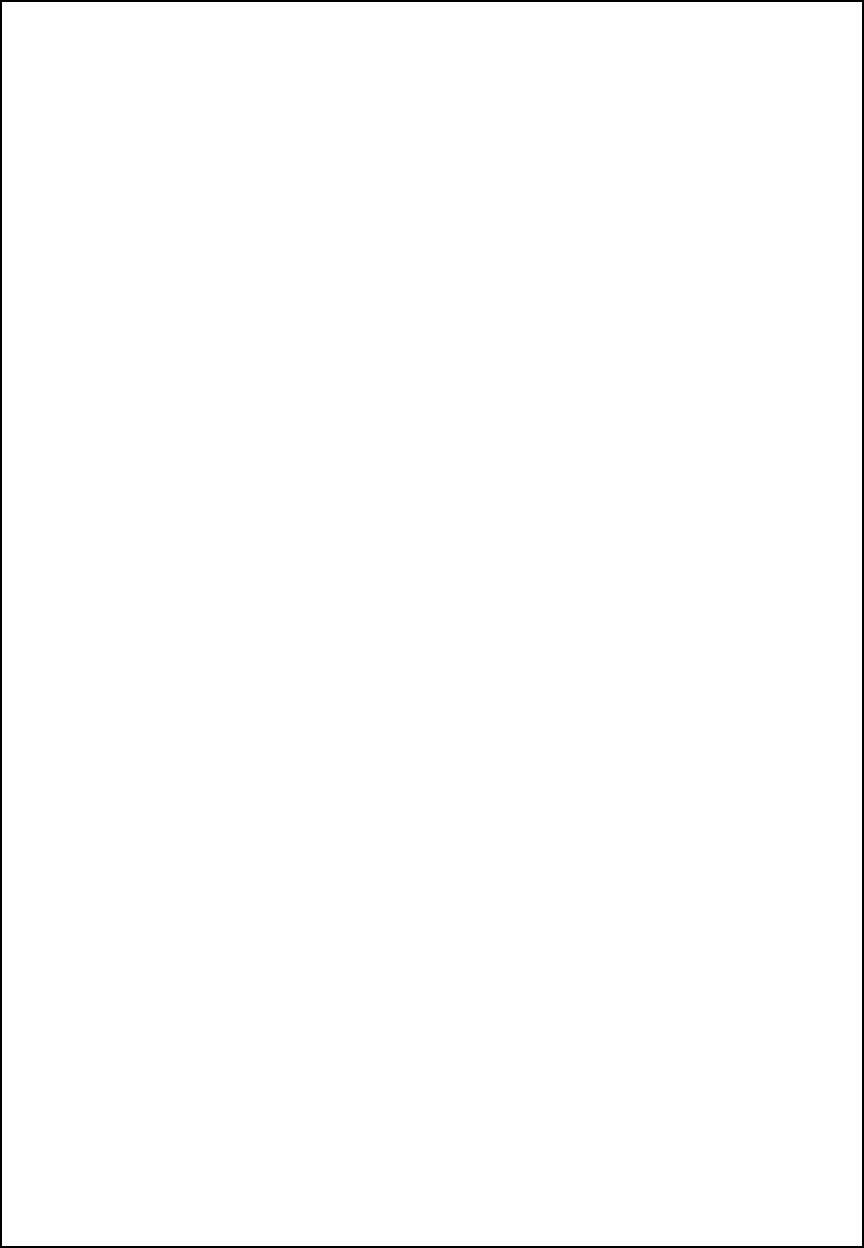


**WORKING
TOGETHER
SAFELY**

Safety Rules and Standards

for

Volunteer Projects



STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

I have been presented with a copy of the booklet *Working Together Safely—Safety Rules and Standards for Volunteer Projects* and have read it in its entirety.

I understand that all construction sites have potential hazards. I also understand that God's Word says that safety and respect for life must be taken very seriously. (Ex. 21:33, 34; Num. 35:22-25; Deut. 22:8) Therefore, for the protection of myself and others, I am fully committed to working safely.

I will be alert to identify and prevent potential safety hazards. I will not compromise safety to reduce costs, to meet deadlines, or to achieve any other goals.

I will willingly participate in all safety-training programs and cooperate with the instruction provided by those in oversight.

I am in complete agreement with what has been published in this booklet and will implement its directives on all volunteer projects.

Date issued: _____

Volunteer: _____
(Sign and print name)

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*Working Together Safely—Safety Rules and Standards
for Volunteer Projects*
English (S-109-E)

Made in the United States of America

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TO ALL VOLUNTEERS

Dear Brothers:

As the “Grand Creator,” Jehovah God considers life sacred and highly valuable. (Eccl. 12:1; Ps. 36:9) As his servants, we are required to adopt that same view. (Eph. 5:1) We do not take unnecessary risks with our life. We understand the need to be safety conscious at all times. (Deut. 22:8; Eccl. 10:9) We sincerely endeavor to apply Scriptural principles so as to protect ourselves and others from physical harm.—Prov. 3:21, 22; Phil. 2:4.

One basic Bible principle states: “Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself, but the inexperienced have passed along and must suffer the penalty.” (Prov. 22:3) What serious consequences there can be if such advice goes unheeded! This is especially true when it comes to construction. When a dangerous situation is not avoided, serious injury or death can occur. Words cannot express the physical and emotional impact this can have—it is devastating. All of us, therefore, have a very serious responsibility to work safely.

The goal of this booklet is to achieve an accident-free environment on all theocratic building projects. This can be accomplished if safety is viewed as everyone’s responsibility.

This booklet is required reading and is yours to keep. Use it as a handy reference. It provides *minimum* safety rules and standards as part of a safety-awareness program outlined by the branch office. In some cases, your oversight may choose to adopt more inclusive standards based on local circumstances.

Overseers should make sure that everyone under their supervision is properly trained and qualified for the work they do. Volunteers should willingly cooperate with such

training and be attentive at all safety meetings. All are expected to promote safe work practices through their speech and personal example.

As we closely work together, let us not only know the rules and standards contained in this booklet but also do all that we can to perform work safely. We pray for Jehovah's continued blessing on our theocratic building projects—all to his praise.—Ps. 127:1.

Thank you for your conscientious support.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

ACCESS CONTROL

Volunteers approved by their local elders are the only ones allowed to work on theocratic building projects.

- Each project site is comprised of three types of zones, which are accessible only to authorized persons. The restricted zones consist of (1) nonconstruction areas, (2) construction areas, and (3) higher-risk areas.
- The overseeing committee will consult with the project coordinator(s), the Safety/First Aid Department, and those assisting with site control to make sure that these areas are clearly marked and their access points monitored. Signs, delineators, safety marking tape, and other means may be utilized.
- Volunteers must comply with all the direction provided regarding these restricted zones. (Restricted zones may not apply on small remodel projects or repair jobs. Ask your committee or overseer for direction when doing such work.)

AGE REQUIREMENTS

Nonconstruction Areas

Volunteers between 13 and 15 years of age are permitted to work in nonconstruction areas if they are accompanied by a parent or a guardian.

- Nonconstruction activities require close adult supervision, since many jobs can be hazard-

ous. For instance, there are dangers in the kitchen area because of close quarters, sharp instruments, and hot items.

Construction Areas

Volunteers 16 and 17 years of age are permitted to work in construction areas if they are properly supervised. However, they are prohibited from performing certain tasks, such as the following:

- Driving a motor vehicle or operating heavy equipment, including forklifts, cranes, skid steer loaders (Bobcats), and grading tractors
- Operating power-driven machines and pneumatic, powder-actuated, and power tools, including nail guns, circular saws, table saws, band saws, chain saws, drills, lasers, and similar types of tools
- Structural demolition
- Working on a roof
- Working on an elevated platform 6 feet or more in height
- Working in trenches or excavations 5 feet or more in depth

Higher-Risk Areas

Volunteers 18 years of age and older may work in higher-risk areas if they are properly trained and authorized by oversight to do so.

ATTIRE AND PERSONAL HEALTH

Carry your durable power of attorney (DPA) card on your person at all times while on the project.—km 12/04 p. 7.

- All must wear clothing that is protective and suitable for work.
- Clothing should be modest, not tight or revealing, regardless of working posture.
- Long pants (no shorts) and shirts with short or long sleeves are required for all volunteers.
- Loose jewelry and rings pose a hazard to those performing certain tasks and should not be worn.
- For sisters, long hair should be tied back while working.
- Come to work well rested and in good physical condition.—g04 2/8 pp. 3-9.
- Beware of heat exhaustion, sunburn, and overexposure to the sun in warm climates or hypothermia and frostbite in cold climates.
- Prevent dehydration. Drink plenty of water, especially during hot and humid weather.—g98 3/22 p. 31.
- Never drive while drowsy. Take a nap, or have someone who is rested do the driving.—g02 5/8 p. 29; g02 8/22 pp. 12-13; g94 2/22 p. 29.

- Modesty requires that you recognize your physical limitations if you have suffered previous injury.—Mic. 6:8.

WORK HABITS AND CONDUCT

Work at a reasonable pace and in such a manner as to ensure your safety and that of others. (g02 2/22 pp. 4-7; g85 7/8 pp. 4-8) Any suggestions to enhance safety are greatly appreciated. Please convey them to your overseer.

- Immediately correct unsafe actions brought to your attention.
- Practice proper lifting techniques, and get help when carrying heavy or bulky materials.—g94 6/8 p. 24.
- Never work alone.
- Horseplay and practical jokes are not allowed.—Prov. 26:19.
- No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the project.
- Volunteers who willfully disregard safety standards will not be allowed to remain on the project.
- Do not minimize near misses (close calls). Report them to both the department overseer and the Safety/First Aid Department. This may help prevent an injury in the future.

INJURIES

If an accident occurs, the following standards are intended to mitigate any adverse effects. All workers on-site must know what to do in case of an injury.

- Remove any immediate hazard that could cause further injury.
- Keep the injured person still and calm.
- Do not move the injured volunteer unless there is danger of further injury.
- Head, neck, and eye injuries require immediate attention.
- Generally, only the Safety/First Aid Department should call 911 when needed.
- Do not minimize injuries. Report them to both the department overseer and the Safety/First Aid Department. This may help prevent an injury in the future.

HOUSEKEEPING

- Keep work areas clean and free of clutter. Remove all trash/debris as soon as possible.
- Give special attention to removing debris that can cut or puncture.
- Sweep in a manner that limits dust.
- Make sure walkways and other locations are clear of cords and hoses that might cause tripping or be damaged.

- Maintain clear access to fire extinguishers and electrical panels.
- Store materials in a way that does not block exits, aisles, passageways, and stairways.

FIRE SAFETY

- Learn the location and proper operation of fire extinguishers.
- Dispose of rags saturated with combustible liquids in approved containers. Never allow the rags to pile up or get mixed in with other trash.
- Store gasoline and flammable liquids in certified, approved safety containers. Never use gasoline for cleaning purposes.
- Do not store liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders in enclosed areas.
- Always provide adequate ventilation when burning combustible fuels in enclosed areas to prevent carbon-monoxide poisoning.
- Be alert to ignition sources, and take preventative measures to avoid explosions and fires.

FOOD SAFETY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Before being assigned to work with or serve food, all volunteers should be properly trained in the basic principles of food safety and should maintain exemplary personal hygiene.

- Those handling and preparing food are to wear disposable sanitary gloves.
- Hair restraints are required when working in food-preparation and serving areas.
- Food handlers, preparers, and servers are to wash their hands when reporting and returning to work.
- Persons with colds, communicable illnesses, and unprotected open sores should not be in food-preparation areas.
- Blood-borne pathogens can cause disease. Avoid contact with another person's blood. If a tool, utensil, or material is contaminated with blood, it should be properly cleaned with a mixture of 10 percent bleach and 90 percent water prior to using again.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Appropriate PPE should be worn anywhere potential safety hazards exist on the project. PPE must be in good condition, fit properly, and be comfortable enough to work in all day. Invest in high-quality PPE. The Safety/First Aid Department may provide equipment if needed. Your overseer may require you to wear additional forms of PPE as necessary.

Hard Hats

- Always wear certified, approved hard hats inside construction areas and higher-risk areas.

Eye Protection

- **Safety glasses:** Always wear certified, approved safety glasses inside construction areas and higher-risk areas. (Certified, approved prescription safety glasses with side shields or over-the-glass safety glasses are acceptable.)
- **Goggles:** Always wear certified, approved splashproof goggles when working with chemicals or liquids per the material safety data sheet (MSDS) instructions.

Face Shields

- Always wear certified, approved face shields over safety glasses while drilling overhead, grinding, or chipping or when flying debris makes safety glasses or goggles insufficient.

Dust Masks

- Always wear high-quality dust masks appropriate to the task when exposed to concentrations of dust and/or airborne debris.

Respirators

- Each volunteer is responsible to maintain his own respirator if one is needed.
- Always wear properly fitted, certified, and approved respirators when exposed to smoke, mists, fumes, sprays, and vapors or when other respiratory hazards exist.

- Proper respirator and cartridge choice are critical; replacement schedules must be followed.

Hearing Protection

- Use earplugs or earmuffs in high-noise work environments.

Hand Protection

- Wear work gloves appropriate to the task.

Knee Protection

- Wear properly fitted kneepads when work requires kneeling on hard surfaces for extended periods of time.

Work Shoes

- Work shoes appropriate for the type of work being done are required. Open-toed shoes or sandals are not acceptable.

Safety Vests

- Wear high-visibility safety vests when directing or working near moving vehicles or equipment.

GENERAL TOOLS AND LADDERS

All tools and ladders are subject to inspection by the Safety/First Aid Department and must employ all safety features and attachments per the manufacturer's directions.

Hand Tools

- Every tool is designed for a certain job and should be used only for that purpose.
- Inspect hand tools regularly. Keep cutting tools sharp. Repair defective tools immediately, or remove them from the project.

Ladders

- Inspect ladders for broken rungs or other defects. Remove defective ladders.—g99 8/8 pp. 22-24.
- Always place ladders on a firm footing.
- Generally, ladders should be erected using a 4:1 ratio: For every 4 feet of working length, the base should be placed 1 foot from vertical.
- Always face a ladder when ascending or descending and maintain at least three points of contact with it at all times (e.g., two feet and one hand).
- Use a tool belt or other means to haul materials.
- Avoid leaning past the side of a ladder. Relocate the ladder if the work requires it.
- Keep the area at the top and bottom of ladders clear at all times.

- Do not use ladder rungs to support the ends of planks or other similar work platforms.
- Do not use buckets, boxes, or other unstable objects as makeshift ladders to access elevated areas.
- Warning signs must be posted or an attendant should be on hand if a ladder is put in front of a doorway.
- Never stand or sit on or above the top two rungs of any ladder.
- Allow only one person on a ladder at a time unless the ladder is specifically designed for two people.
- Stepladders should not exceed 10 feet in total height or be manned above 6 feet.
- Extension ladders used to access an elevated platform or a roof should extend at least 3 feet above the landing and be secured to prevent them from moving and causing falls.

HIGHER-RISK TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

An authorized person may be required to inspect or supervise the use of higher-risk tools or equipment.

Power Tools

- Only trained operators should use power tools.

- Examine power tools for damaged parts and frayed/cut electric cords before each use.
- All power tools must be grounded or double insulated.
- Repair defective power tools and cords immediately, or remove them from the project.
- Do not use power tools with improper or damaged guards or with guards removed.
- Disconnect power tools from their power source when replacing blades or bits.

Powder-Actuated and Pneumatic Tools

- Only trained operators should use powder-actuated and pneumatic tools. Worker certification is required when governed by jurisdiction.
- All operators and volunteers nearby must wear eye protection.
- Do not load powder-actuated tools until ready for use.
- Do not leave a loaded tool or any cartridge/shots unattended.
- Only use fasteners specifically designed for the material being penetrated.

Lasers

Lasers can cause eye damage.

- Only trained operators should use laser equipment.
- Set up lasers at a level where the beam cannot directly enter anyone's eyes.
- Employ laser beam shutters or caps when the laser is turned on but idle.
- Turn off laser equipment when transmission is not required.

Motorized Vehicles

- All on-site/off-site drivers who shuttle workers, run errands, transport materials, and so on, should complete a *Volunteer Worker Driver Qualification* form.
- Wear seat belts at all times.
- Drivers should not use cell phones while vehicles are in motion.
- Only use vehicles that are in a safe condition, properly registered, and adequately insured and that meet all regulatory requirements.
- Passengers should be transported in an approved seating area only.
- Turn off gasoline-powered vehicles before fueling.

- Properly secure all loads. Under no circumstances should anyone ride on top of loads.
- Oversized loads must be properly flagged.
- All state and local requirements must be followed when towing trailers. Be sure to use proper safety chains, hitch safety clips, and lighting when needed.

Heavy Equipment

- Only trained operators should run heavy equipment and trucks.
- Wear seat belts at all times when supplied by the manufacturer.
- Do not use cell phones while operating construction equipment.
- All equipment should be in a safe condition and meet all regulatory requirements.
- Passengers should be transported in an approved seating area only.
- Alarms and horns for backing up must be operational.
- Trained operators must calculate and manage the capacity of their machines.
- Properly trained flagmen and/or spotters must be in use when work is near pedestrians or vehicular traffic.

- All heavy equipment and trucks must stay at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

Cranes and Forklifts

- Only trained operators and riggers should run cranes and forklifts. Certification is required according to jurisdiction.
- A competent person must inspect the rigging before each lift.
- Wear seat belts at all times when supplied by the manufacturer.
- Do not use cell phones while operating cranes and forklifts.
- All cranes and forklifts should be in a safe condition and meet regulatory requirements.
- Passengers should be transported in an approved seating area only.
- Alarms and horns for backing up must be operational.
- No one should be allowed under a suspended load.
- Trained operators must calculate and manage the capacity of their machines.
- Access to lift areas must always be controlled because of potential crush hazards from rotating cabs and swinging loads. Only workers di-

rectly involved with the activity are allowed in this area.

Scissors and Boom Lifts

- Only trained operators should use and inspect scissors and boom lifts.
- Exercise special care when operating off-road lifts to prevent overturning.
- All volunteers working from a boom lift must wear an approved fall-restraint system.
- Do not leave an elevated platform without fall protection.

HIGHER-RISK AREAS AND TASKS

Fall Protection

Falls are the most common cause of serious accidents on construction sites. Fall protection must be established when working from an elevated position of 6 feet high and above. (This includes work done on ladders.) Fall protection includes railings, scaffolds, nets, full-body harnesses, lanyards, lifelines, and other approved methods.

- A fall-protection system must be set up under the supervision of a competent person. This person will be responsible for inspections and documentation of all systems.
- Protect or cap rebar, stakes, lightning rods, or any item that could be an impalement hazard.

- Any floor or roof opening that is larger than 2 inches by 2 inches must be covered. The hole cover must be able to withstand 2 times the maximum intended load and should be labeled “COVER” or “HOLE” in high-visibility paint. It must be secured from any movement and may only be removed by an authorized person.

Roofs

- Provide safe and secure access to the roof.
- Inspect for moisture, frost, or other slipping hazards before getting onto roof surfaces.
- Evacuate the roof when storms, high winds, lightning, rain, or other adverse weather conditions exist.
- A designated, competent carpenter should inspect all trusses for soundness prior to their erection.
- Do not overload the roof with materials or workers.
- Keep all tools and materials not in use a minimum of 2 feet from an unprotected edge of the roof.

Scaffolding and Platforms

- Only erect scaffolding under the supervision of a designated, competent person. Plan fall-

protection measures during the erection and dismantling process.

- Place the scaffolding legs on firm footings only, secured from any movement or tipping. Do not use scrap lumber, concrete blocks, or bricks to stabilize the scaffolding legs. Where needed, use heavy-duty solid wood under the legs to support maximum loads.
- Set all scaffolding legs and platforms plumb and level.
- Fully plank all scaffolding.
- Assemble decking on a platform so that no space between the planks exceeds 1 inch. Only use planking that is scaffold grade or equivalent.
- Planks must overhang end supports no less than 6 inches but no more than 12 inches unless they are cleated or otherwise secured in place. Always lap planks in the same direction.
- Inspect scaffolding planks on a regular basis. Discard and replace cracked or split planks immediately.
- Inspect metal plank hooks on scaffolding. Replace warped, corroded, or bent hooks.
- Use a ladder or stair tower to access the scaffolding platforms. Do not climb on end frames unless the frames are designed with built-in

ladders. Never use cross braces on tubular scaffolding as a means of access or egress.

- Do not work on any scaffolding until a designated, competent person has approved the complete installation.
- Avoid leaning past the side rails. Relocate the scaffolding if necessary.
- Do not overload the scaffolding with materials or workers.
- Ensure that open sides and platforms 4 feet or more in height have guardrails.
- Do not move rolling scaffolding with volunteers on board when the platform is set 4 feet or more in height. Lock the wheels when in use.

Electrical

- Only qualified volunteers should perform electrical work.
- All work areas should be well lit.
- Temporary power poles, spider boxes, generators, and all extension cords must have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection during construction.
- Protect all live electrical installations such as receptacles, switches, cables, and panels from accidental contact.

- Use protective cage guards to cover bulbs used for temporary lighting, and do not allow them to come into contact with combustible surfaces.
- Do not use metal ladders at any time while doing electrical work.
- Maintain at least a 10-foot clearance from overhead utility power lines.

Trenches, Excavations, and Shoring

- “Call Before You Dig!” notifications are required in accord with local standards. Contact your local centralized utility agency and have any existing utilities located before you dig or drill. Written confirmation of its inspection and approval is preferred. Privately placed utilities will need to be located by others.
- Trenches and excavations that are 5 feet deep or more (or trenches dug in unstable soil) should be properly sloped or benched or have shoring or a trench shield installed before entering. A competent person must approve the shoring design.
- At the beginning of each workday and when weather, soil, or work conditions change, a competent person should inspect all trenches for evidence of a situation that could result in

a cave-in or a trench failure before allowing anyone to enter.

- Keep materials, equipment, and stockpiled dirt at least 2 feet from the edge of the excavation.
- Trenches 4 feet deep or more should have ladders extending 3 feet above the trench and within 25 feet of volunteers for quick egress.
- Where possible, trenches should be opened only as far as the work in them can be completed and the trench closed at the end of the day. When trenches are left unattended or open overnight, they should be properly fenced, barricaded, and protected to prevent people and vehicles from entering.
- Report suspicion of contaminated materials or soil to the project coordinator.
- Take immediate mitigation measures when groundwater is encountered.

Welding, Cutting, and Open-Flame Work

Take fire-prevention precautions in areas where welding, torching, soldering, or other open-flame work (hot work) is being done.

- Perform hot work only if specifically directed to do so.
- Make sure a suitable fire extinguisher is available when performing any hot work.

- Do not perform hot work near flammable components, including paints or heavy dust concentrations.
- Ensure that a volunteer (fireguard) is present during and at least 30 minutes after any hot work is performed. The fireguard will move combustibles as far as possible from the work and have a fire extinguisher in hand.
- Protect others in the vicinity from arc-welding flash and cutting operations by using a non-flammable shield barrier.
- Wear eye protection to prevent exposure to arc flash.
- Clothing made from natural fibers (e.g., cotton or wool) or equivalent nonmelting fabric must be worn along with proper protective leathers or flame-resistant clothing while performing hot work.
- Compressed-gas cylinders require special handling when being transported, moved, or stored.

Building Demolition

- Specific predemolition planning will include structural review by a competent construction professional. When shoring and/or underpinning is required, prepare a specific plan outlining goals, rules, and policies for volunteers.

- Carefully investigate below-grade conditions.
- Locate utility connections and isolate and/or cap as required.
- Select workers who are qualified for their specific tasks.
- Follow rules for proper handling of materials such as lead, asbestos, and mold.
- Establish task-specific PPE to protect against such hazards as mold, dust, insulation, and bird or rodent droppings.

MISCELLANEOUS SAFETY CONCERNS

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

- Chemical manufacturers provide MSDS information on the hazards associated with the chemicals they sell and the PPE needed to protect oneself while using their chemicals. The Safety/First Aid Department keeps a binder of such information with all the known hazardous chemicals used on the project. Notify the department overseer when bringing hazardous material on-site.

Lockout/Tagout

- Locks and tags must be used to prevent the operation of a switch, valve, or piece of machinery in cases where someone may get hurt or equipment may be damaged.

- Place tags on a power source to warn others not to operate equipment.

Refrigerant Gas

- A competent person with refrigerant certification must perform any work with refrigerant gas.

Confined Spaces

- Beware of entrapment, being crushed, asphyxiation, or electrocution. Only designated competent people can enter a confined space.

