Houston Fall Prevention Alliance

FALL PREVENTION ALLIANCE TOOLBOX TALK ON

HIGHWALLS

Company: _____ Job Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) mandates that a fall arrest or fall prevention system be used where there is a danger of falling when working at the top of a highwall. The most commonly cited violation at mines has been the failure to use fall protection. It is important for all workers to understand the practice of fall prevention/protection and the procedures to follow around highwall areas and hazard zones.

Following are safety guidelines to ensure safe mining procedures:

- Make sure you recognize potential hazards and implement strategies and procedures that can dramatically reduce unsafe conditions.
- Hazard zone: A hazard zone is anywhere there is no physical barrier when workers are within 6 feet of a stable edge. A hazard zone is also anywhere where there may be unstable ground or footing within 6 feet of an edge.
- Appropriate supervisors or other designated persons must examine, and where applicable, test ground conditions prior to work after blasting, and as ground conditions warrant during the work shift. Examine highwalls weekly or after every rain, freeze, or thaw.
- Loose hazardous material must be stripped for a safe distance from the top of highwalls. The loose unconsolidated material must be sloped to the angle of repose, or barriers, baffle boards, screens, or other devices be provided that afford equivalent protection.

Before work begins around a highwall area:

- An experienced supervisor/competent person will identify all hazard zones of thehighwall and work area. (Overhangs, back breaks, and cavities must be taken into account when identifying the hazard zone.)
- Use physical and visual barriers to keep workers out of the hazard zones (e.g. brightly painted line at the 6 ft. determination).Painted lines ensure you know when to take additional fall prevention procedures.Know what and where these barriers are and thesafety procedures to follow.
- Corrective actions and procedures must be taken when unsafe conditions are found. Make sure these corrections are done before any work is performed in the highwall area.
- Communicate with your fellow workers. Always let them know where you are going to be working. Safety is everyone's business.

Fall Protection:

- Anyone who approaches a hazard zone must wear fall protection and know the proper use of fall protection equipment, including a body harness, lanyard, and connectors.
- Inspect the harness for frayed edges, broken fibers, pulled stitches, cuts, burns, and chemical damage. Check the lanyard for cuts, discoloration, cracks, frayed or broken stitching. Remove from service any defective equipment.
- A properly secured fall prevention system is preferred before attempting to use a fall arrest system. Only when fall prevention cannot be used will a fall arrest system become an option.

Fall Prevention:

- Make sure you have been trained in proper fall protection procedures. Workers must wear a harness or safety belt with a properly positioned and secured lanyard shorter than the distance to the hazard. Lanyards must be tied off to equipment or to a T-bar that is dropped in a drill hole.

Fall Arrest:

- Make sure you have been trained in proper fall protection procedures. When using the fall arrest system, make sure you use a harness that is tied off to a shock absorbing lanyard using the D-ring on the back. While MSHA still allows the use of safety belts, the aforementioned is always preferred.

The Houston Fall Prevention Alliance was formed by the below organizations to provide their members, and others, with information, guidance and access to training resources that will help them protect the health and safety of workers, particularly by reducing and preventing exposure to fall hazards in the construction industries and addressing fall related issues and understand the rights of workers and the responsibilities of employers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act). In developing this alliance, these organizations recognize that OSHA's State Plan and On-site Consultation Project partners are an integral part of the OSHA national effort.

alliance — An OSHA Cooperative Program

ABC — Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.

AMERICAN SUBCONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION HOUSTON CHAPTER — Find Your Opportunity

GULF COAST SAFETY INSTITUTE — College of the Mainland

SAIA SCAFFOLD & ACCESS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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When using equipment as a tie off point, the following procedures will be followed: (using either method of fall protection):

- Keep your equipment parallel to the highwall.
- Make sure the parking brake is engaged.
- Put the transmission in gear or in park.
- Ensure the wheels are chocked.
- Take the keys out of the ignition.

Conclusion: Highwalls in any form are dangerous. Know the degree of danger. Recognize the stability of the highwall. The vibration of machinery and blasting changes the stability. By using practical procedures the danger can be abated.

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American Subcontractors Association Houston Chapter — Find Your Opportunity

Gulf Coast Safety Institute — College of the Mainland

SAIA Scaffold & Access Industry Association