

# Safety Toolbox Talks

## BRIESER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SITE SAFETY MEETING - TOOL BOX TALK

### Installing Drywall

The two main causes of injuries to drywall installers and carpenters are overexertion and falls. These injuries frequently occur while workers are installing drywall sheets. Drywall installers and carpenters found that workers believed their biggest risk of physical stress was from lifting, carrying, or holding drywall. I also found that overexertion hazards were a major source of injury to drywall installers. Installing drywall can cause overexertion injuries, usually to the back, because drywall sheets are heavy and bulky. Injuries include strains, sprains, or tears and can range from minor to severe.

Workers should be aware that drywall sheets vary by thickness and weight: some sheets weigh less than 55 pounds, and others weigh more than 120 pounds.

Falls are an additional major cause of injury during drywall installation. Fall injuries for drywall installers and carpenters can be caused by losing balance as a result of lifting, carrying, or holding heavy and bulky drywall sheets, or by other events, such as falls to a lower level from stairs. Poor lighting and a wet or slippery work floor, along with obstruction of peripheral vision due to handling oversized drywall sheets, can also place drywall installers and carpenters at risk of slip and fall incidents.

In addition, workers do not have enough hand grip strength to install drywall without risk of overexertion injury. Cold and wet conditions can make it more difficult. Even if a worker has good hand and body strength and uses good installation techniques, continued installation by hand can lead to significant overexertion injuries and loss of balance.

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### Controls

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I recommend the following to reduce injuries to drywall installers and carpenters from overexertion and falls.

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#### Pre-job preparation and set-up

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- Stock the Job.
- Know the weight of the drywall sheet before starting the job and plan accordingly. For example, a 3/8-inch-thick, 4-×8-foot sheet could weigh 55 pounds; a similarly sized 5/8-inch-thick sheet could weigh 70 pounds.
- Have forklifts, hand trucks, carts, or dollies available to move drywall to work locations.
- Minimize the need to move the drywall sheets. For example, have them delivered to the place where they will be installed—not to a common area for building supplies.
- Make sure that stored materials do not create any safety hazards such as tripping.
- Use work practices that reduce the need for workers to install drywall by hand. For example, have a drywall lift or drywall jacks available at worksites when working alone, installing larger or heavier sheets, or installing ceilings.

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## During the job

- Make sure that workers are familiar with and use good lifting and installation techniques such as those listed here.
- When using ladders to install drywall make sure precautions are taken for inspection and housekeeping.
- Use PVC-dot grip gloves to reduce the grip force needed to lift, carry, and hold drywall sheet.
- Use Kevlar gloves when using utility knife to score and snap drywall.
- You may be using a “RotoZip” to cut out outlets, always check wires in boxes are not live.
- Bend the knees instead of the back when lifting, holding, and carrying drywall. The picture below shows proper horizontal installation sequences. Don’t try to be a tough guy.
- For vertical hanging, raise the sheet, shift grip to opposite sides of the sheet, then rotate the sheet into a vertical position and secure to the wall.
- Use two workers to lift larger, thicker, and heavier sheets.
- Lift only one sheet at a time.
- Rotate hanging tasks and other installation tasks (making cutouts, taping, installing trim) and schedule frequent rest breaks to reduce overexertion hazards.
- Use a drywall lift or drywall jacks to place and hold a sheet for ceiling installation or to place heavier sheets.
- Use forklifts, hand trucks, carts, or dollies to move drywall to convenient work locations. Use dollies to move sheets through narrow openings.



PVC-dot grip style gloves for use with drywall.



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Proper horizontal installation sequence: (1) Raise edge of sheet, (2) grip with both hands, (3) hold in place with one hand and shift grip to bottom, (4) shift both hands to bottom, and (5) lift into position. Make sure we check our workers that they are wearing proper PPE "Hard Hat"

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**HAVE A GREAT DAY HANGING DRYWALL**

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