

Drywall Installation Meeting Kit

What's At Stake

Workers who handle drywall sheets are at high risk of overexertion and fall injuries.

What's the Danger

Drywall installers spend most of the day standing, bending, or stretching. This work is physically demanding.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

PREVENTION – HOW TO AVOID MISHAPS

1. **Avoid Dust:** Drywall installation involves cutting and sawing the drywall and this leads to a very dusty environment. This dust irritates your respiratory system, and you should, therefore, cover your nose and mouth with dust masks or respirators while working.
2. **Invest In The Best Personal Protective Equipment:** Personal protective equipment is a key part of overall drywall safety. There are a few different areas that these services. For example, taking the time to wear safety glasses and a mask will protect you from the dust that comes up while working with drywall. Protective footwear will protect you if a sheet or chunk falls on your toes or feet. Wearing gloves with PVC dots will help to improve your grip to minimize the chance of dropping anything.
3. **Maintain A Clean Environment:** The working area should be clean before, during, and after the job. Accumulation of clutter and dust could hide dangerous objects.
4. **Use The Right Drywall Materials And Tools:** The drywall tools you use (razor knives, drywall (putty) knives, outlet

markers, drill attachments, circle cutters and others) should be of the highest standard to prevent injury. You should be mindful of your safety and that of others when using these tools, especially power tools and ladders. Consider the weight, comfort, grip, noise and vibration levels, and ease of triggering when buying power tools. Four-finger triggers are the best for drywall installation. You should only buy expert-recommended drywall materials (drywall sheets, tapes, screws, and mud). Ensure the framing lumber has a low moisture content as this prevents loosening of the screws. The drywall board should be fire-rated from 1 to 4 hours.

5. Take Care Of Your Body – Examine Practices To Minimize Risk

- Reduce small injuries to your joints and muscles by avoiding forceful repeated motions like sanding, lifting, cutting, and taping. Rotate jobs to give your muscles and joints time to recover.
- When setting up a load, ensure it is close to waist height. The load should be as close to your body as possible when carrying, lifting, and putting down. Do not twist your back when performing these activities.
- Avoid reaching overhead when holding the drywall in place as this can cause joint, neck, muscle, shoulder, hand, and back injuries. Use board hanger clamps and t-jacks to hold the drywall in place when nailing.
- Consider using a drywall cart when moving items around.
- Invest in drywall handles to make the lifting less awkward and to improve your grip.
- Take short breaks (about 15 seconds each) several times to prevent injuries and fatigue and stay hydrated.

1. Work In Pairs: Working in pairs is important for two main reasons. First, there are going to be certain sheets of drywall that are just too heavy or unwieldy for a single person to move on their own. It's better just to get extra help rather than try and force it through on your own.

Secondly, having a partner helps you be more accountable for every other thing on this list.

2. **Be Extra Careful When Doing Demolition:** It is particularly important that you be careful during the demolition process. Take care to avoid electric shock, water pipes, gas lines, and other fixtures. Do not remove walls that are load bearing. Block off the ducts and shut off the furnace when doing demolition. This will not only be safer for the workers but also prevent your ducts saving you air conditioner repair and furnace repair headache.
3. **Practice Proper Lifting Techniques:** There is a certain method to use when holding drywall to avoid the chance of injury. A single drywall sheet can range anywhere from 55 to 120 pounds, and it's not always easy to determine this at first glance. Keep yourself protected by avoiding lifting while you bend or twist.
4. **Know The Materials You Are Working With:** Whether we're talking about the joint compound or other materials on your drywall job, you want to know the potential risk of every single one. The easiest way to do this is put together a material safety data sheet. This can let people know about the potential risk of exposure to any single material, and what specific gear they need to have on.
5. **Beware Around You:** Awareness matters when working with drywall, especially in an existing home. For example, if there is electrical wiring nearby, the slightest contact could result in a serious accident. As a result, you don't just want to rely on the blueprints for the workspace when putting drywall up. Actually, take a look in the work area before you get started to keep an eye out for any hazard. Also, make sure you make a formal record of this as well.
6. **Minimize Dust Exposures:** Respiratory protection is a major concern while working with drywall but even with a mask and safety glasses, the dust can get to be too much. Don't be afraid to leave the worksite for a bit if there is heavy dust around or you are feeling any sort of respiratory distress. It's also a good idea to try and practice good ventilation on your job site to minimize the chance of

things getting to that point.

FINAL WORD

Drywall installers are often working under high pressure in effort to complete the tasks quickly. This makes falls, improper lifting, and a wide variety of incidents much more likely. Working with an unrealistic work schedule is often the reason for accidents.