Muddy Work Areas Meeting Kit

When holding a job that is primarily done on the outside, there are many weather conditions that can pose a problem. When it rains, it is going to create damp, wet, and muddy situations. That can make certain tasks dangerous or even impossible to complete.

There are usually deadlines to meet and you don’t always have time for the rain to slow you down. The health and safety of employees always come first. If things are too muddy **precautions** will need to be put into place.

HAZARDS AND INJURIES CREATED BY MUDDY WORK AREAS

- Equipment/ vehicle crashes or rollovers. Traction and control is greatly reduced when operating on mud.
- Slips, trips, and falls. Walking around or getting into equipment in the mud can lead to slipping or falling.
- Sprains/ strains. Many people will pull muscles due to getting their boots stuck in the mud and trying to yank them out. Also, falling over with your feet stuck in an awkward position can lead to suffering a sprain or strain injury.

HOW TO WORK SAFELY IN MUD

Here are some of the best practices to remember when you are working in muddy situations.

Try to Keep Things Clean: The most beneficial thing that you can do is to try and clean things up as much as possible. If you have ladders, steps, or any other surfaces that you are working on with mud, clean them off before stepping on them. If your boots get packed with mud, take the time to stop and knock it off before continuing to work.

Don’t Rush and Be Patient: If you find your boot stuck in the mud, don’t try to rush and yank it out. Try to slow down, and take a

minute to work it out of the mud safely.

Watch Where You Are Going: When on a construction site that has mud present, there are going to be certain areas that are slick. When you are driving the equipment around or a vehicle, try to pay close attention to where you are driving.

Make Accommodations for Dangerous Areas: If you are using heavy equipment and you notice there is an area that is struggling that you need to cross to get to your work area, take the time to fix the problem. Take the extra time to make a situation safer and in the long run, it will save you time.

Don’t Work In Areas That Can Wait: If there is an area of your worksite that can wait till conditions are drier, then wait. There isn’t a good enough reason to risk the problems that can occur. If your time schedule allows it, stop operations till drier weather, or just eliminate that one area till situations are better.

Make Good Decisions: It is so easy to get comfortable with your job and push through certain situations. When you have been doing a job for a long time, you can sometimes push the issue. It is very important to always go back to your training and follow the best protocol for all involved.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT – MORE PROTECTION

There are many PPE items that are required to wear on a worksite.

- Hard hats
- Steel toe boots
- Work gloves
- Eye protection
- Safety vests
- Earplugs
- Earmuffs
- Face shields
- Safety harnesses

All of these things have and should be worn at all appropriate times. The problem is, that most of these things are not going to

be any help to you in muddy conditions. Getting equipment stuck and possibly getting injured due to the slick conditions is not able to be prevented with these items. That is why all operations should stop if possible when the weather is a problem and causes muddy conditions for you.

Muddy conditions can spring up any time of year, but they’re especially prevalent (and costly) in the spring. The risks to businesses are trifold, including loss of production, equipment issues, and potential for employee injuries.

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKERS WHEN WORKING IN MUD

- The single **best practice is eliminating** work in excessively muddy areas until it clears up or work areas are addressed.
- Dress up areas with equipment such as a bulldozer to get down to more solid ground.
- If work is continuing in an area that is muddy, stop when needed to dress it up again.
    - It takes less time to fix an area to make it safer than it does to pull out stuck vehicles or equipment that tips over.
- Never drive into excessively muddy areas or down slick slopes.
    - Getting stuck creates more hazards due to other personnel having to come into the field to pull out your vehicle or equipment.
- If you get your foot stuck in the mud, slowly work it out by moving your foot back and forth.
    - Yanking on it is not very effective and can result in injury.
- Maintain clean steps on equipment and remove mud off of your boots before climbing up and down equipment.
    - Always use three points of contact.

TAKE AWAY

While these safeguards seem like common sense, many injuries and

property damage incidents occur every year due to poor site conditions. Use your best judgement when working in the mud. Do not put yourself in a situation where you make a bad situation worse. Always adjust work plans to site conditions.

FINAL WORD

While these safeguards seem like common sense, many injuries and property damage incidents occur every year due to poor site conditions. Use your best judgement when working in the mud. Do not put yourself in a situation where you make a bad situation worse. Always adjust work plans to site conditions.