

Workplace Hazards in Plastering

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Powered and non-powered tools	Electrocution Being struck by broken drill bits, cutters, swarf and offcuts (potential for serious eye, head or facial injury) Cuts and lacerations	Students must NOT operate powered tools ♦ Provide instruction in safe use of hand tools	Students must NOT operate powered tools ♦ Use hand tools carefully, according to your instructions
Working at heights	Falls from heights, potential for fatality or serious injury	Students must NOT work at heights where there is any risk of a fall	Students must NOT work at heights where there is any risk of a fall
Mobile plant including mobile platform	Falls from heights, potential for fatality or serious injury	Students must NOT operate mobile plant	Students must NOT operate mobile plant
Hazardous substances, e.g. plaster dust, asbestos, plasterboard fibres, medium density fibreboard (MDF) – formaldehyde vapour, wood adhesives	Even relatively short-term exposure can cause respiratory complaints Long-term dust exposures could lead to 'chronic' (ongoing) respiratory illnesses Formaldehyde is carcinogenic and exposure can lead to asbestosis and cancer	♦ Assess the work area prior to work including identification of materials with asbestos ♦ Provide Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and documented risk assessment for dangerous and hazardous chemicals ♦ Provide dust collector bags for portable handtools ♦ Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect against inhalation of fine plaster dust	♦ Read MSDS and follow safe working instructions ♦ Use PPE provided to protect you against dust and vapours
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions, awkward postures, particularly when handling large plaster sheets or plastering overhead)	Musculoskeletal disorders	♦ Document and communicate safe manual handling procedures ♦ Provide mechanical aids where practicable ♦ Encourage team lifting where appropriate ♦ Provide training in safe manual handling techniques	♦ Use mechanical aids provided ♦ Seek help when you think a team lift is required ♦ Exercise: warm up/stretch before starting work, and cool down/stretch at end of the shift or working day
Noise	Long-term exposure to excessive noise can lead to deafness	♦ Maintain powered tools to reduce noise ♦ Limit noise exposure (e.g. by rotating jobs) ♦ Provide PPE (hearing protection)	♦ Use PPE (hearing protection) provided
Hot weather conditions	Heat rashes, heat cramps, heat stress, dehydration, sunburn	♦ Provide regular rest breaks ♦ Re-schedule work if extreme weather conditions present risk	♦ Dress appropriately for the conditions ♦ Take scheduled breaks
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	♦ Establish work place policy ♦ Provide staff briefings or training	♦ Report any concerns immediately

