

Working in Occupied Buildings

About 8 minutes to deliver

Everyone around you is untrained, unaware, and entitled to walk wherever they like — which makes them your hazard to control.

On a closed site everybody has been inducted. In an occupied building — a hospital, a school, a store, an office, someone's home — nobody has. They do not know what a barricade means, they will step over a cord, and they are allowed to be there.

That makes them part of your job.

PROTECT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT YOURS

- Hard barriers, not tape. Tape is a suggestion. Use a physical barrier that a child, a distracted adult or a visually impaired person cannot walk through by accident.
- Signs that say what and until when, and in the languages the building uses.
- Never leave an opening, a hole, an unattended ladder or a live panel even for a minute in an occupied space. Somebody will find it.
- Cords and hoses get routed, covered and taped, or the route gets closed.
- Clean as you go. Dust and debris in an occupied building is a slip hazard for someone in dress shoes.

EXITS ARE NOT YOURS TO BLOCK

Never obstruct an exit, an exit route, a fire door, an extinguisher, an alarm pull or a panel. If work must cross an exit route, a temporary route is signed and lit first, and the building's people are told before it changes, not after.

THE BUILDING'S RULES OVERRIDE YOURS

- Hot work almost always needs the building's permit, on top of yours, and often a fire watch for longer than you would run.
- Alarms and sprinklers may need isolating — with the fire service and the building notified, an impairment watch in place, and a hard end time.
- Infection control in healthcare. Dust barriers, negative pressure, and an ICRA permit. Dust from a ceiling in a hospital corridor is a clinical risk, not a housekeeping one.
- Schools mean background checks, escorts, and no work while children are present in many districts.
- Utilities cannot be interrupted without agreement — somebody upstairs is on oxygen, running a server, or cooking.

NOISE, DUST AND HOURS

Agree the hours, and expect to be asked to move the loud work. Silica, solvent fumes and welding fumes travel through a return air system into rooms where people are sitting. Isolate the HVAC before you generate them, and put the extraction where the work is.

And be the crew they want back: badge visible, radio down, no shouting, park where you were told.

ASK THE CREW

- Who else is in this building today, and where will they walk?
- Are any exits, extinguishers or panels blocked by our work?
- Whose permit do we need besides our own?

29 CFR 1926.20 · 29 CFR 1926.200 · 29 CFR 1910.38

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafety.com

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Working in Occupied Buildings

About 8 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1926.20 · 29 CFR 1926.200 · 29 CFR 1910.38

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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