

Painting Toolbox Talks

Twelve short safety talks for a painting crew. Each takes a few minutes. Read it out, ask the two questions, and have everyone sign the sheet at the end of this pack.

	Talk
1	Ladder setup and use
2	Scaffolds and lifts
3	Breathing safely: dust, vapors and respirators
4	Airless spray guns and injection injury
5	Old paint and lead dust
6	Product labels and safety data sheets
7	Oily rags and fire
8	Heat on exterior jobs
9	Slips, trips and drop cloths
10	Electricity: outlets, fixtures and power lines
11	Eyes and skin
12	Working in occupied buildings

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Talk 1. Ladder setup and use

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Falls from ladders are among the most common serious injuries on painting jobs, and most happen on short, routine climbs rather than high ones.

Key points

- Inspect the ladder before every use: rails, rungs, feet and locks. Tag and remove a damaged ladder.
- Set it on firm, level ground. Never on a drop cloth, a bucket or a pile of furniture.
- Keep your belt buckle between the rails. If you have to lean, climb down and move the ladder.
- Face the ladder going up and down, and keep three points of contact.
- Do not stand on the top step or the top cap of a stepladder.

Ask the crew

1. Where on this job are we most likely to be tempted to overreach?
2. Which ladder is the right height for the stairwell?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 2. Scaffolds and lifts

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Working platforms put people high enough that a fall is rarely minor, and they put tools above people who are not looking up.

Key points

- Only people trained on the equipment use it.
- Check the platform, guardrails and base each day before anyone goes up.
- Use the fall protection the setup calls for, every time.
- Keep tools and materials secured, and barricade the area below.
- Stop and report anything that moves, leans or looks altered.

Ask the crew

1. Who checked the scaffold this morning?
2. How are we keeping people out of the area below?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 3. Breathing safely: dust, vapors and respirators

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Sanding dust and solvent vapor do their damage slowly and quietly, which is why they get ignored.

Key points

- Read the product safety data sheet before opening a new product.
- Keep air moving through enclosed rooms. Open windows, use fans, take breaks outside the space.
- A dust mask is not a respirator. Use the respirator the product and task call for.
- A respirator only works if it fits and the cartridges are right for the job.
- Leave the room if you feel dizzy, sick or get a headache, and tell the foreman.

Ask the crew

1. Which room on this job has the worst airflow?
2. Does everyone have the right cartridges for today?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 4. Airless spray guns and injection injury

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

An airless spray tip can push paint through skin. The wound can look small and still be a medical emergency.

Key points

- Never point the gun at anyone, including yourself.
- Lock the trigger whenever you stop spraying.
- Relieve pressure before changing or cleaning a tip.
- Never wipe the tip or block it with a hand or a rag.
- Any injection injury goes straight to a hospital, and you tell them it was paint under pressure.

Ask the crew

1. Where is the trigger lock on each of our guns?
2. What is our pressure relief routine before a tip change?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 5. Old paint and lead dust

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Sanding, scraping or heat on old paint in an older building can release lead dust that harms adults and especially children.

Key points

- Find out before work starts whether lead safe work practices apply to this job.
- Contain the work area and keep occupants, children and pets out.
- Do not dry sand or dry scrape old paint without the controls the job requires.
- Clean up with methods that capture dust rather than spread it.
- Change and wash before eating, drinking or going home.

Ask the crew

1. Has this building been checked for lead paint?
2. How are we keeping the dust inside the work area?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 6. Product labels and safety data sheets

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Every product on the truck comes with information about its hazards. It only helps if someone reads it.

Key points

- Know where the safety data sheets are kept on this job.
- Read the label before you mix, thin or spray a product you have not used before.
- Keep products in labeled containers. Never in an unmarked bucket or a drink bottle.
- Clean up spills right away using the method on the safety data sheet.
- Report any skin, eye or breathing reaction to the foreman.

Ask the crew

1. Where are the safety data sheets for today?
2. Which product on site has the strictest handling notes?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 7. Oily rags and fire

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Rags soaked in oil based stain or finish can heat up and catch fire on their own, hours after the work is done.

Key points

- Never leave oily rags in a pile, a bag or a closed vehicle.
- Lay rags flat to dry outdoors, away from buildings, or store them in a closed metal container with water.
- Keep solvent and ignition sources apart, and do not smoke near the work.
- Know where the nearest fire extinguisher is.
- Dispose of rags and leftovers the way local rules require.

Ask the crew

1. Where are we putting rags at the end of today?
2. Who checks the truck before it is locked up?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 8. Heat on exterior jobs

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Heat illness can come on fast and is easy to mistake for tiredness. The person affected is often the last to notice.

Key points

- Drink water regularly, before you feel thirsty.
- Plan the hardest work for the cooler part of the day.
- Take rest breaks in the shade.
- Watch each other for confusion, cramps, nausea or someone who stops sweating.
- Anyone showing signs of heat illness stops work and cools down, and serious signs mean calling for help.

Ask the crew

1. Where is the shade and water on this site?
2. Who is new to working in this heat?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 9. Slips, trips and drop cloths

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Hoses, cords, drop cloths and plastic sheeting turn a normal floor into a trip hazard, for the crew and for occupants.

Key points

- Tape down or route cords and hoses along walls, not across walkways.
- Use drop cloths that stay put. Plastic is slippery, especially on stairs.
- Keep stairways and exits clear at all times.
- Clean up spills before someone walks through them.
- Store tools and buckets out of walkways when not in use.

Ask the crew

1. Which walkway on this job do occupants still use?
2. Where are we routing the hose today?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 10. Electricity: outlets, fixtures and power lines

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Painting puts people next to outlets, switches, fixtures and overhead lines, often with metal tools and wet hands.

Key points

- Check cords and tools for damage before use, and take damaged ones out of service.
- Know where the circuits are, and do not remove covers from live devices.
- Keep ladders, poles and lifts well away from overhead power lines.
- Use ground fault protection where the job calls for it.
- Keep water and wet rags away from electrical equipment.

Ask the crew

1. Are there overhead lines near the exterior work?
2. Which outlets on this job are we covering, and how?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 11. Eyes and skin

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Paint, solvent and dust in the eyes or on the skin cause most of the small injuries that cost a day of work.

Key points

- Wear safety glasses for sanding, scraping, overhead work and mixing.
- Wear goggles for spraying and for any product the safety data sheet flags.
- Wear gloves suited to the product.
- Know where clean water is for flushing eyes.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking.

Ask the crew

1. Who needs new glasses or gloves?
2. Where is the eyewash or clean water on this site?

Notes and actions agreed

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Talk 12. Working in occupied buildings

Date		Job		Led by	
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Why it matters

Offices, schools, hospitals and homes stay in use while the crew works, and occupants do not know where the hazards are.

Key points

- Agree the work areas and hours with the site contact before starting.
- Mark off the area and keep it clear of occupants.
- Keep products, ladders and tools secured whenever the crew steps away.
- Ventilate, and follow any site rules about odor and products.
- Leave exits, corridors and fire equipment clear and unobstructed.

Ask the crew

1. Who is our site contact today?
2. Which areas must stay open while we work?

Notes and actions agreed

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Toolbox talk sign in sheet

Talk		Date	
Job		Led by	

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