Trade Terms Introduced in This Module

Accident: Per the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), an unplanned event that results in personal injury or property damage.

Arc welding: The joining of metal parts by fusion, in which the necessary heat is produced by means of an electric arc.

Brazing: A process using heat in excess of 800°F (427°C) to melt a filler metal that is drawn into a connection. Brazing is commonly used to join copper pipe.

Combustible: Capable of easily igniting and rapidly burning; used to describe a fuel with a flash point at or above 100°F (38°C).

Competent person: A person who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions that are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.

Confined space: A work area large enough for a person to work in, but with limited means of entry and exit and not designed for continuous occupancy. Tanks, vessels, silos, pits, vaults, and hoppers are examples of confined spaces. Also see permit-required confined space.

Cross-bracing: Braces (metal or wood) placed diagonally from the bottom of one rail to the top of another rail to add support to a structure.

Excavation: Any man-made cut, cavity, trench, or depression in an earth surface, formed by removing earth. It can be made for anything from basements to highways. Also see trench.

Flammable: Capable of easily igniting and rapidly burning; used to describe a fuel with a flash point below 100°F (38°C).

Flash burn: The damage that can be done to eyes after even brief exposure to ultraviolet light from arc welding. A flash burn requires medical attention.

Flash point: The temperature at which fuel gives off enough gases (vapors) to burn.

Ground: The conducting connection between electrical equipment or an electrical circuit and the earth.

Ground fault: An unintentional, electrically conducting connection between an ungrounded conductor of an electrical circuit and the normally noncurrent-carrying conductors, metal objects, or the earth.

Ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI): A device that interrupts and de-energizes an electrical circuit to protect a person from electrocution.

Guarded: Enclosed, fenced, covered, or otherwise protected by barriers, rails, covers, or platforms to prevent dangerous contact.

Hand line: A line attached to a tool or object so a worker can pull it up after climbing a ladder or scaffold.

Hazard Communication Standard (HAZCOM): The standard that requires contractors to educate employees about hazardous chemicals on the job site and how to work with them safely.

Hydraulic: Powered by fluid under pressure.

Incident: Per the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), an unplanned event that does not result in personal injury but may result in property damage or is worthy of recording.

Lanyard: A short section of rope or strap, one end of which is attached to a worker’s safety harness and the other to a strong anchor point above the work area.

Lockout/tagout: A formal procedure for taking equipment out of service and ensuring that it cannot be operated until a qualified person has removed the lock and/or warning tag.

Management system: The organization of a company’s management, including reporting procedures, supervisory responsibility, and administration.

Maximum intended load: The total weight of all people, equipment, tools, materials, and loads that a ladder can hold at one time.

Midrail: Mid-level, horizontal board required on all open sides of scaffolds and platforms that are more than 14 inches (35 cm) from the face of the structure and more than 10 feet (3.05 m) above the ground. It is placed halfway between the toeboard and the top rail.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): An agency of the US Department of Labor. Also refers to the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, a law that applies to more than more than 111 million workers and 7 million job sites in the country.
Permit-required confined space: A confined space that has been evaluated and found to have actual or potential hazards, such as a toxic atmosphere or other serious safety or health hazard. Workers need written authorization to enter a permit-required confined space. Also see confined space.

Personal protective equipment (PPE): Equipment or clothing designed to prevent or reduce injuries.

Planked: Having pieces of material 2 inches (5 cm) thick or greater and 6 inches (15 cm) wide or greater used as flooring, decking, or scaffold decks.

Pneumatic: Powered by air pressure, such as a pneumatic tool.

Proximity work: Work done near a hazard but not actually in contact with it.

Qualified person: A person who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate, or professional standing, or by extensive knowledge, training, and experience, has demonstrated the ability to solve or prevent problems relating to a certain subject, work, or project.

Respirator: A device that provides clean, filtered air for breathing, no matter what is in the surrounding air.

Safety culture: The culture created when the whole company sees the value of a safe work environment.

Safety data sheet (SDS): A document that must accompany any hazardous substance. The SDS identifies the substance and gives the exposure limits, the physical and chemical characteristics, the kind of hazard it presents, precautions for safe handling and use, and specific control measures.

Scaffold: An elevated platform for workers and materials.

Shielding: A structure used to protect workers in trenches but lacking the ability to prevent cave-ins.

Shoring: Using pieces of timber, usually in a diagonal position, to hold a wall in place temporarily.

Signaler: A person who is responsible for directing a vehicle when the driver’s vision is blocked in any way.

Six-foot rule: A rule stating that platforms or work surfaces with unprotected sides or edges that are 6 feet (~2 m) or higher than the ground or level below it require fall protection.

Spoil: Material such as earth removed while digging a trench or excavation.

Toeboard: A vertical barrier at floor level attached along exposed edges of a platform, runway, or ramp to prevent materials and people from falling.

Top rail: A top-level, horizontal board required on all open sides of scaffolds and platforms that are more than 14 inches (36 cm) from the face of the structure and more than 10 feet (3 m) above the ground.

Trench: A narrow excavation made below the surface of the ground that is generally deeper than it is wide, with a maximum width of 15 feet (4.6 m). Also see excavation.

Welding curtain: A protective screen set up around a welding operation designed to safeguard workers not directly involved in that operation.

Wind sock: A cloth cone open at both ends mounted in a high place to show which direction the wind is blowing.