Demolition toolbox talk

Excavation and structures · about 5 minutes · read it out, or say it in your own words

SITE OR JOB	DATE	PRESENTER

Demolition takes away the parts that hold a building up, so a wall, slab or roof can come down before anyone expects it. Even a small renovation that knocks out one wall carries this risk, along with live services hidden in walls and old materials such as asbestos and lead paint. The Construction Regulations require a survey, a method statement and a competent supervisor before demolition starts.

SAY THIS

Survey and method first

Before any demolition, a competent person surveys the structure and writes a method statement that says how it will come down and in what order. A competent person appointed in writing supervises the work and checks the structure as we go. Follow the method. Do not decide on your own to knock out the next wall because it looks easy.

Know what holds it up

Some walls, beams and columns carry the floor or roof above. Never remove or cut any of them until the supervisor says it is propped or shored. Never work under a slab, beam or wall that is hanging over without proper support. If you hear cracking or see new cracks or movement, get out and warn everyone.

Do not overload floors

Rubble is heavy. Piles of broken brick and concrete on a slab or roof can make it collapse. Clear rubble often, and do not bring a machine onto a floor unless it has been confirmed strong enough to carry it.

Services off and confirmed

Electricity, water and gas must be found and made safe before demolition starts. A switch in the off position does not prove a cable is dead. If you find a cable, pipe or meter you were not told about, stop and report it.

Control falling rubble

Nothing is dropped outside the walls unless the area below is protected. Rubble goes down a proper chute into a skip or a fenced area. A chute steeper than 45 degrees must be closed on all four sides. Over doorways and walkways we use a catch platform or fence off the danger area.

Hidden dangers in old buildings

Old roof sheets, pipe lagging, floor tiles and paint may contain asbestos or lead. By law, demolition may not start until asbestos has been identified and removed or otherwise controlled. If you find material you are not sure about, stop, do not break it, and tell the supervisor. Keep dust down with water where you can, and make sure stairs and work areas are well lit before anyone works there.

CHECK ON SITE TODAY

- ☐ Is there a method statement for today's demolition, and has the crew been told the sequence?
- ☐ Who is the appointed demolition supervisor today?
- ☐ Props and shoring in place before load-bearing parts are removed
- ☐ Electricity, water and gas isolated and confirmed before work starts
- ☐ Rubble cleared from floors, chute fixed and discharging into a skip or fenced area
- ☐ Danger zones below fenced off, with catch platforms over walkways

ASK THE CREW

- ? Which walls or beams in this building are holding something up?
- ? What would make you stop and get out of the building?
- ? Where does the rubble go, and how does it get there?
- ? What materials here might be asbestos or lead, and what do we do if we find them?

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THIS JOB

Hard hat · Safety boots with a protective sole · Safety glasses or goggles · Dust mask or respirator suited to the dust, as the risk assessment says · Heavy-duty gloves · Hearing protection when using breakers and machines

THE LAW

Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 14(1) to (4): Demolition work; Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 14(5) to (12): Demolition work; Asbestos Abatement Regulations, 2020, regulation 24(i): Prohibition. What each one says, in plain words, with links: sitediary.co.za/toolbox-talks/demolition/

Toolbox talk attendance register

TOPIC

Demolition work

DATE

SITE OR JOB

TIME

PRESENTER

COMPANY

PRESENTER SIGNATURE

By signing, I confirm that I attended this toolbox talk, that it was given in a language I understand, and that I could ask questions.

NO.	NAME AND SURNAME	COMPANY OR TRADE	SIGNATURE
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Keep this register in the site health and safety file. Log the talk in today's site diary with a photo of this page.