

Piling

Reason	Unless there is attention to health and safety, work on piling sites can be particularly dangerous. Piling work can involve several hazardous activities – even if not directly involved, you must take care.
Outline	This talk covers the dangers of piling work and the precautions to be taken.



All piling operations must be controlled and supervised



Keep clear of piling operations if you are not directly involved



Piling is safe as long as everyone does their job and those not involved stay well clear.

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Hazards

1. Always follow your safe system of work and ask your supervisor if you have any questions.
2. Manual handling is a common feature of piling activities; many people in the industry have time off work due to resulting back injuries.
3. At times, piling activities will require operatives to work at height. Be safe if you have to work at height and, even if not directly involved, be aware of what is going on above you.
4. Ensure that you wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as necessary; a safety helmet, safety boots, gloves and eye and hearing protection should always be worn. Immediately replace any damaged PPE.
5. Trailing hoses and low-level projecting pile reinforcement can present trip hazards. Hoses should be routed away from pedestrian routes, and protective caps should be fitted to projecting pile reinforcement.
6. Most piling operations will involve lifting using a crane or the piling rig itself. Keep clear if you are not directly involved.
7. If working over or near deep water, an emergency action plan must be in place. Emergency services' contact details must be to hand, a personal flotation device should be worn and a rescue boat and trained staff should be available.
8. Piling can involve the use of hazardous substances. Follow the safe system of work at all times.

Precautions

1. If you are involved in manual handling, use appropriate equipment or get assistance if necessary.
2. Be aware of, and avoid, features that may cause you to slip, trip or fall; they may not be obvious at first sight. Keep the site tidy to avoid these hazards.
3. Do not attempt to operate the piling rig or other equipment unless you are trained and authorised to do so.
4. Only people who have been trained and are competent should sling loads or signal the crane operator.
5. Never be tempted to ride on any load that is being lifted, lowered or moved.
6. Read and understand the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) assessments for any hazardous substances before you use them.
7. Promptly clean off any hazardous substances that get onto exposed skin.



What information should be referred to when using hazardous substances?
What should you do if some of your PPE is damaged?
Who should you approach if you have any questions?