

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR WORKING IN ATTICS AND CRAWL SPACES

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. GENERAL	1
2. SITE PLANNING INSPECTION	1
3. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS	2

1. GENERAL

1.01 This section is being issued to address situations that may arise when job duties require working in attics and crawl spaces, i.e.: inadequate lighting; electrical hazards; insufficient walking surface; rodent/insect infestation, etc. It also addresses safety equipment and precautions to be considered to minimize the potential for accidents and personal injury.

2. SITE PLANNING INSPECTION

2.01 A site planning inspection is an important process to enable the technician to recognize actual and potential hazards and determine appropriate precautions to be taken.

2.02 Technicians should perform a site planning inspection before starting work to determine:

- Location of all equipment.
- A physical inspection of the premises, including the condition of attics and crawl spaces.
- Work plan, potential problems drilling holes, mounting equipment, running wires, etc.
- Location of shut-off valves for gas, water and electric.
- Probability of pipes, fire blocks and wires inside of walls.

- Location of any asbestos containing material (ACM). If friable ACM exists, contact supervisor before continuing work.
- Existence of obstacles such as duct work, storage items, etc.

2.03 All buildings, both new and old, finished and unfinished have their own individual hazards. Awareness of the surroundings and environment is imperative to complete a task safely and efficiently.

2.04 Attics and crawl spaces present other hazards not usually found in occupied areas. Since these areas are not usually climate controlled, technicians must be prepared to react to brief periods of extreme heat or cold.

2.05 Attic and crawl space work is susceptible to heat and cold stress. Technicians should respect these potential hazards and be acutely aware of their own physical condition.

- **HEAT STRESS** - Heat stress is simply the body overheating. Whenever the body gets hot, it reacts to the heat and attempts to cool itself by shutting down other functions. Its signals include sweating; flushed or pale skin; dizziness; weakness, nausea, rapid breathing; headache or fainting.
- **HYPOTHERMIA** - In hypothermia the entire body cools because its ability to keep warm fails. Signals of hypothermia include shivering, numbness, glassy stare and loss of consciousness.

2.06 A thorough inspection of the condition of attic walking and working surfaces must be completed. Falls can occur while moving across beams and joists in attics. The technician must move slowly and methodically and be within reach of something for support and balance, i.e.; roof rafters or ceiling joists.

If walking on floor boards in attics, the technician must ensure the boards are in good condition and will support their weight before stepping down on the board. **“Look Where You Step.”**

3. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

3.01 The following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shall be used when working in an attic or crawl space:

- Standard approved head protection, to protect against conditions in these areas, i.e.; low head clearance, pipes, electrical wiring, roofing nails, etc.
- Eye Protection, safety glasses or goggles.
- 188A Test Set to check for potential electrical hazards, i.e., conduit; electrical boxes; etc.
- Adequate clothing to cover exposed skin to protect from possible contact with insulation material.
- Adequate lighting, this can be accomplished by use of a head lamp attached to the hard-hat for straight directional lighting.
- A battery powered fluorescent or a drop light (equipped with GFCI) for wide area lighting.

3.02 The following PPE should be considered when working in attics and crawl spaces:

- Disposable dust mask may be used at the employee's discretion to provide added comfort from dust accumulation.
- Knee pads, for use when crawling is necessary.
- A working surface board equipped with rollers for riding over joists.
- An approved power-finding device for locating power wires inside walls and ceilings prior to drilling.

3.03 Special equipment, tools and materials specific to working in attics and crawl spaces should be company approved items ordered from the current stock list catalog.

This special equipment, tools and materials shall be used in accordance with manufacturers instructions.

3.04 The following safety precautions should be taken when working in an attic or crawl space:

- Look for stinging insects. Wasps and yellow jackets will nest in attics and crawl spaces. Standard wasp and insect spray should be used to deal with these situations if they can not be avoided.
- Look for rodent nests and avoid these infestations. If rodent infestations do exist, inform customer the hazard needs to be removed before work can continue.

- 3.05** Working in attics and crawl spaces pose many hazards. Technicians must always use caution and pay strict attention to safety precautions and the surrounding conditions when working in these areas.
- 3.06** Supervision should be contacted if a questionable situation arises before continuing the work operation.