The importance of site safety cannot be overemphasized for construction contractors - by Ed Camuso

November 04, 2016 - Owners Developers & Managers

Ed Camuso, East Coast Office Installations

The importance of site safety cannot be overemphasized. General contractors and subcontractors involved in a construction project are particularly sensitized to safe operations, but the need for safety precautions has extended beyond jobsite workers. Recently there has been more definitive focus on site safety for everyone who sets foot on a job site, not just those working on building out the space.

Safety problems create big concerns, and not just because of the obvious risk to the people involved in an incident. Safety problems cost money. They can shut down a job, result in penalties of all varieties, and thus eat quickly into the profitability of a job. They usually have long-term repercussions as well, for the company, and sometimes for the industry. When a safety issue is glaring enough, usually there are policy changes at large, and usually in the extreme, swinging the pendulum of procedure too far in the direction of caution.

So for many reasons, having a solid safety plan and following it is a good thing for the individual, the company, the project, and the industry as a whole. In the past, the subcontractors who work on the job once it is largely completed, like furniture installation companies, were more relaxed about safety and protection, since the risk was perceived as lower. Now, with the growing popularity of finished products like architectural glass and demountable walls, where installation begins earlier in the construction process, safety has become a much more significant requirement throughout the life of the job.

The practice of developing a site-specific plan for each project is a good one to implement. Whether or not it’s required, when a company gets into the habit of addressing each project and going through the checklist of site-specific safety issues, it greatly improves the chances that everyone on the job is reminded of safe practices and will utilize these on their own.

Items in the site-specific plan may include basic rules and policies (such as no smoking on site), emergency procedures, material and tool handling, and standards for jobsite cleanliness.

It’s easy for skilled workers to get a little lax on some of the safety rules. Some seem unnecessarily cautious to a seasoned worker. The best way to avoid costly safety problems and
promote health and well-being is to communicate clearly and remind workers on a per-job basis that there are standards that protect everyone, those responsible for performing the work as well as the casual visitor to the site. A well-thought-out and well-communicated plan helps to avoid the problems that occur when jobsite safety is compromised.

Ed Camuso is president and founder of East Coast Office Installations, Wilmington, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540