



Student Monitor Training Module: Painting on walls

Painting walls, etc., with rollers and brushes does not seem to be a dangerous occupation, and yet during the summer of '06 a Student Monitor was injured doing this. These safety tips will help prevent you and other people from getting hurt.

Ladders:

- Do not stand on chairs, window sills, boxes or other improvised steps.
- If you need to reach heights, ask your Supervisor for a ladder. Even a three-step ladder is far safer than standing on something you could fall off.
- Treat a ladder with respect: open the spreader bars fully, never stand on the top or the next step down unless the ladder has a separate rail against which you can brace your legs, keep your body within the rails of the ladder – do not lean out too far.

Paints:

- Always read the labels, and pay attention to any warnings.
- Ask your Supervisor for the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for that material
- If splashed in the eyes or mouth, check the label or MSDS immediately. Call for medical attention if necessary.

Solvents:

- Do not use solvent-based paints without permission from Safety & Risk Management. Solvents travel freely in the air handling systems and can affect many people.
- Water-based paints are far easier and safer to use.

Tripping Hazards:

- Spread drop cloths out carefully so that the floor, other furniture, etc., are fully protected.
- Make sure that the drop cloth is not a tripping hazard – both for you and others. Tape the edges down if necessary.
- Be careful not to leave equipment around on the floor. Paint trays, rollers, brushes and cans should be stored safely against a wall and not where you or others can fall over them.

Exits and stairwells:

- Be careful not to block doorways, exits and stairwells.
- If painting in a doorway block the access to it with a chair and a sign to warn people that you are working there.

Setting Yourself Up for an Injury:

- Most injuries occur when people are rushed, fatigued, frustrated or complacent.
- Recognize when you may be more at risk of injury and slow down, take breaks, eat properly, and think about how best to approach your task.
- Listen to your instincts. If it feels unsafe – it probably is! Stop and find a better way to perform that task, and you may save yourself some grief.

Communicating With Your Supervisor:

- If you are unsure how to do something safely – ask your Supervisor.
- Your Supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that you work safely, so listen to instructions – and if you don't understand ask for them to be repeated.