

## **Toolbox Talk # 14.04 – Rebar and Impalement Hazards**

Steel reinforcing bars, or rebar, are a common hazard on construction sites. The thin steel bars can stick out from construction projects and pose a hazard to workers who can cut or scratch themselves on the sharp ends. Workers that stumble or fall onto the exposed steel bars can be pierced or impaled on them, resulting in serious internal injuries and death.

To protect workers from this hazard, OSHA requires that rebar and other projections on the worksite "be guarded to eliminate the hazard of impalement." Guarding from rebar impalement hazards must be done when workers will be working around or at any height above exposed rebar. This also includes work situations where rebar is below grade or in a basement.

The next level of impalement protection is to use protective guard systems to cover the protruding ends. Steel reinforced rebar caps provide the strongest and best impalement protection for workers. Proper protective rebar caps should be at least 4" square or, if they are round, they should have a 4.5 inch diameter.

Some rebar caps are too narrow or not steel-reinforced. If a worker falls on a standard plastic cap, the impact pressure can push the rebar through the cap and impale the worker, or impale the worker cap and all. Standard mushroom rebar caps and/or covers are only appropriate to prevent cuts, abrasions or other minor injuries when workers are working at grade with rebar and when there is no impalement hazard.

Long 2 x 4 wood caps or other manufactured troughs can be used to effectively protect exposed rebar. If rebar caps and troughs are not available or feasible on a jobsite, the rebar can be bent so that the exposed ends are no longer upright and posing an impalement hazard.

Workers should be vigilant around exposed rebar ends. Fall prevention is the first defense and covered rebar ends are extra insurance against impalement in case of a fall. With the focus on safety and protected rebar ends, this is one safety point workers will be glad to miss.

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Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Other safety issues covered or comments from crew members:

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### Attendees:

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