



Drywallers put the finishing touches on our home and office interiors by installing and finishing sheetrock walls. To lift, cut, and maneuver heavy drywall sheets and fix them in place, physical stamina is required. Finishing and sanding seams is also an ergonomic and physical challenge. Consider that this demanding work is often done on a construction site and at heights. Drywallers always need to think about safety on the job.

Lifting and maneuvering tools and heavy, awkward drywall sheets pose an ergonomic risk for drywallers.

Maintaining good physical condition and using proper lifting techniques can reduce the chance of injury and strain.

Working in pairs makes it easier to lift, position, and control sheetrock.

Seam taping and sanding tools with spring-assisted or powered systems make overhead finishing work easier by reducing the force that workers must apply.

Completing work one task at a time (hanging, taping, finishing, etc.) may be efficient but harder on the body; completing one area allows workers to rotate duties and give muscles a break.

Because drywallers work at heights to install tall walls and ceilings, they need to use extra caution to prevent falls. Workers can use ladders if the work can be done safely from them, but they should

follow ladder safety rules.

Lean-to or jack scaffolds, shore scaffolds, nailed brackets, loose tile, loose brick, loose blocks, and other unstable objects cannot be used as working platforms or supports.

Stilts should never be used due to their instability.

Sturdy scaffolds or steps at least 20 inches wide provide safe, stable working platforms when installed and used correctly.

Dust is a hazard for drywallers at the beginning and end of every job. When sheetrock is cut, the gypsum dust released can irritate the eyes and lungs. Dust from dry mixing joint compounds can irritate; pre-mixed compounds can reduce worker dust exposure. Sanding finished joints can also create a lot of dust. Whenever job tasks may create dust, **safety glasses and respirators or dust masks** should be used to protect workers' eyes and lungs. Proper ventilation on the Jobsite can reduce dust in the air.

Electrical safety should be considered when drywallers are fastening sheetrock to wall frames.

Workers should be cautious about interior wall wiring and ensure that electric boxes have proper shielding to prevent screws and nails from penetrating them. Powered nail guns, fasteners, and drills should be adequately grounded and in good working order to reduce the risk of electric shock. Other tools, especially cutting tools, should be correctly used.

Because drywalling is usually one of the last tasks on a construction job, it is often done under deadline pressure. However, the need for speed is never an excuse to forget safety. Good planning and safety procedures give a drywalling job a smooth finish.