

Construction – Working With Pipe (Safely!)

Pipe can be awkward to handle. It's hard to balance and it has a tendency to roll when loose. Here are some tips to help you work safely with pipe:

- Stay clear of moving or rolling pipe. It's tempting to jump over rolling pipe as it approaches you, but it's a dangerous game. You may slip or trip as you jump.
- Like any other heavy load, lift pipe by bending and lifting with your knees, not your back.
- Watch out for moving pipe, both to the side and above you. From one end, pipe looks like a very small load. But pipe swings a wide and deadly arc. And if pipe slips in a sling, one end can suddenly drop and hit you.
- When transporting pipe on two-wheeled trailers, place a wooden strip or piece of belting across the bolsters before loading the pipe. This makes it easier to tighten the ropes that keep the pipes from slipping.
- When you're moving pipe in a sling, make sure it's balanced so it won't slip out when it's raised. Move only one loose section at a time. It's not safe to try to move pipe that's covered with frost, ice or snow in a sling. Use a caliper-type clamp for these situations.
- Protect your fingers by keeping your hands on the outside of the pipe when you're guiding it. If your fingers are over the end of the pipe, the sharp edges can cut or amputate your fingers, or if the end of the pipe hits something, your fingers could break.
- Wear gloves when carrying or working with pipe.
- If two of you are carrying a length of pipe on your shoulders, keep each other informed of what you're going to do next. You can injure your partner by dropping your end of the pipe unexpectedly or by not lifting at the same time as your partner.
- Store pipe with timbers or beams between each layer and securely tie them down.
- When moving pipe, watch your swing, be aware of others around you, and be careful not to strike people or equipment with your load.