

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GANDHINAGAR

SAFETY OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Background:

1. There is a wide-spread concern about lack of safety awareness and culture in India, and far too many deaths and injuries take place in India that can be easily avoided.
2. Construction work by its very nature is prone to accidents and it should be the endeavour of everyone to ensure that all workers at the site follow strict safety norms for their own safety and that of their co-workers. However, this is not often the case, resulting in a number of avoidable accidents at our construction sites.
3. Accidents in an academic campus pose additional challenges. The community of students and faculty tend to be very sensitive and accident(s) at construction site of an academic institute can have disproportionate consequences in terms of internal dynamics of the institute and on the construction activity.
4. IITGN greatly values dignity for all and makes extraordinary efforts to sensitize our students towards societal issues. Hence, the Institute must ensure that all constructions in its own campus meet the highest safety standards. Else, we will be seen by our own students as “preaching but not practicing”.
5. Most Central Government funded institutions such as IITGN either get their work done through CPWD or follow the CPWD manuals and norms for the construction works. CPWD has very specific requirements on construction safety in its contracts. For instance, the “General Conditions of Contract” for the CPWD works contains the CPWD Safety Code running over 5 pages. However, it is rare to find such stringent conditions being implemented on our construction sites.

Strategy:

6. IITGN has worked with CPWD to incorporate some **Special Conditions** in the contracts for the IITGN works. The following gives a general sense of such Special Conditions:
 - a. The contractor must employ a Safety Manager and two Safety Supervisors, who is responsible for developing safety programs, training, implementation and propagating safety culture. Failure to do so will attract a specified per-day financial penalty on the contractor.
 - b. A Safety Monitoring Committee has been formed consisting of representatives of the contractor, subcontractors (if any), CPWD and IITGN with the mandate to monitor and achieve the objectives of construction safety continuously, progressively and through effective actions. The Committee must meet regularly and its proceedings must be received by IITGN administration within a week of the meeting.
 - c. All workers must undergo safety training (to be imparted by the Safety Manager of the contractor) for two to three days before they can be allowed to enter into the construction areas. Thereafter, a regular schedule of refresher workshops on safety will be maintained by the Safety Manager.
 - d. Any workers found within the construction site without safety gadgets (as per occupation) shall have to pay a fine (say Rs 100 to Rs 200) per count of

default and shall be barred from the site for one day. For all such defaults, the contractor shall also pay a matching amount as a fine. Money thus collected will be utilized for supporting welfare programmes for the workers.

7. IITGN itself has engaged a Safety Officer, in order to ensure that the contractors and the CPWD are indeed implementing all the safety procedures effectively. This is similar to the Security Advisor at IITGN (a retired police officer) who ensures that the security agency and their personnel are functioning as appropriate and periodically conducts surprise checks and imposes fines on the security agency for violations.