



MCA
DETROIT

• HEALTH AND SAFETY DIVISION •

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Mechanical Contractors Association of Detroit

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TOOLBOX TALK: STRESS

Duration: 10–12 minutes

1. Why We Talk About Stress on the Job

Stress is part of life—but when it becomes overwhelming and constant, it affects:

- Focus
- Judgment
- Patience
- Safety

We work in a high-risk environment where mental distractions can be just as dangerous as physical ones.

2. What Is Stress?

Stress is the body's response to pressure—whether from work, finances, family, health, or life events.

Short-term stress can help with focus.

Long-term stress damages both **mental and physical health**.

3. Signs of Unhealthy Stress

Mental

- Racing thoughts
- Trouble focusing
- Anxiety or constant worry

Physical

- Tight muscles
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Fatigue

Behavior

- Short temper
- Withdrawing
- Increased alcohol or nicotine use
- Poor sleep

4. How Stress Impacts Jobsite Safety

High stress increases:

- Distractions
- Poor decision making
- Risk-taking
- Accidents and near misses

A stressed mind is a **distracted mind**.

5. Healthy Ways to Manage Stress

- Deep breathing during breaks
- Physical activity
- Talking to someone you trust
- Getting enough rest
- Breaking large problems into smaller steps

Avoid relying on alcohol, drugs, or isolation.

6. Looking Out for the Crew

- Watch for behavior changes
- Encourage support without judgment
- Normalize asking for help
- Step in if someone seems overwhelmed or unsafe

7. Key Takeaways

- Stress is normal—chronic stress is dangerous
- It directly affects safety and performance
- Healthy coping protects both your job and your life
- Support is strength, not weakness