Identifying the hazards in high-risk activities is a vital step to eliminating fatalities. The Keys to Life highlights hazards you may encounter and defines behaviors to help maintain your safety.

We can achieve a zero-injury culture when we work according to our Safety Principles: personal accountability, hazard recognition and active caring. Continue to put safety first in all tasks by performing thorough pre-job briefings, wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and following existing safety rules.

Driving safely
Wear seat belts, follow posted speed limits and comply with all other motor vehicle regulations. While driving, do not send or read texts or emails, minimize use of cellphones and use hands-free devices only, and avoid any other distractions that would remove your focus from the road. Before moving a parked vehicle, circle the vehicle to ensure there are no obstacles around, above, or below it, and that the vehicle is safe to operate. Position vehicles to minimize the need for backing. Pull through or back in to parking spaces when possible and use a backing guide when available.

Personal protective equipment
Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the hazards involved in the work. Use PPE to provide protection from injuries to the head, eyes, body, hands and feet.

Pre-job briefings
Prior to performing any work activities, identify hazards associated with the task during a thorough job briefing. You should also clearly identify strategies to eliminate or mitigate hazards and create clarity for the role of each crew member. Job briefings are required at the following times: The start of the work activity, when personnel, conditions, equipment, or exposures change or when new personnel arrive on scene.

Work zone safety
Work zones shall be established at all work sites where vehicle traffic is a hazard. Traffic control warning devices shall be appropriately placed before work is begun.

Electrical safety
• Wear rubber gloves and sleeves as required when within minimum approach distances, except when performing live-line bare-hand work per approved work methods.
• All work on lines or equipment presumed de-energized shall be performed only after the lines or equipment have been isolated, tested for voltage, locked and or tagged out, and grounded (as required).
• When working in proximity to energized lines or equipment or any that may become energized, vehicles and mobile equipment shall be grounded.
• Cover up/insulate and isolate – Before beginning work on any energized or potentially energized lines or equipment, all conductors, lines and other equipment that may be contacted shall be completely covered with approved hoses, blankets and/or hoods.

Pole/structure inspection
All poles shall be visually inspected and tested, using the sound and probe/prod test, prior to climbing, placing a ladder against the pole, or changing polarity. Visual inspections shall be performed on all non-wood structures prior to climbing, alteration of loading, and installing or removing equipment.

Falls from elevation
Utilize fall protection equipment when required for work at heights greater than 4 feet. Inspect equipment before use and use it properly. Maintain three points of contact when changing elevation.

Falling objects/line of fire
When overhead work is being performed, employees shall not enter the fall or drop zone without suspending overhead work activities, establishing three-way communications and receiving permission to enter. Consider “line of fire” when setting up work sites to ensure that objects that could fall or move suddenly due to stored energy do not cause injury to employees or the public.

Rigging
Plan all lifting activities. Inspect all rigging equipment prior to each use. Employees involved in rigging activities shall be properly trained. The manufacturer’s equipment ratings/limits shall not be exceeded.

Confined space entry
Do not enter a confined space until the proper evaluation has been performed and appropriate controls have been put in place. Confirm acceptable atmospheric air quality prior to entry with an approved monitor. When required, a qualified attendant shall be present and an air quality monitor shall be in continuous use.

Trenching/excavations
• Prior to any excavation work, take all reasonable steps to identify underground gas and electric utility lines.
• Any excavation where work is to be performed shall be shored, sloped, or shielded when the depth exceeds 5 feet or if soil conditions are determined to be unstable to prevent cave-in or entrapment.