

Housekeeping

List housekeeping hazards on site.

Explain dangers

We all know how fast rubbish builds up on a site—scrap lumber, broken bricks, pieces of drywall, strap-bands, and packaging.

How can you concentrate on your work when you're worried about slipping, falling, or tripping over garbage and debris? Production and installation time go up while quality tails off.

Every year, poor housekeeping and storage practices cause many accidents and injuries. Construction rubbish is often irregular in shape, hard to handle, and full of sharp objects.

One of the biggest problems is packaging. Too often it gets removed from material and left wherever it falls. This creates tripping and slipping hazards. It also makes other hazards hard to see.

Even worse, it invites more mess. When a site isn't cleaned up, no one cares about leaving garbage where it drops.

When that happens, you can't see faulty wiring, protruding nails, damaged flooring, and missing scaffold planks.

Clutter left around work and travel areas also makes it difficult to use material-handling equipment. As a result, more material gets handled manually, which increases the risk of injury and property damage.

Housekeeping means cleaning up scrap and debris, putting it in containers, and making sure the containers are emptied regularly. It also means proper storage of materials and equipment. Effective housekeeping and storage will prevent incidents and injuries.

Identify controls

- Keep work and travel areas kept tidy, well-lit, and ventilated. Clean up as work proceeds.
- Keep equipment and the areas around equipment free of scrap and debris.
- Pick up, store, or dispose of tools, material, or debris that may cause tripping or other hazards.
- Keep stairways, passageways, ramps, and other travel areas clear at all times.
- Secure loose or light materials stored on roofs and open floors to keep them from blowing away in the wind. Resecure the material after removing any of it.
- Never throw material or let it fall from one level to another. Use an enclosed chute or lower the material in containers.
- Keep material at least 1.8 metres (6 feet) away from floor and roof openings, floor and roof edges, excavations, and trenches.
- Near opening, store material so that it won't roll or slide in the direction of the opening. Use blocking if necessary.
- Store materials away from overhead powerlines.
- Before handling used lumber, remove or bend over any protruding nails and chip away hardened concrete.
- Remove flammable rubbish and debris immediately from sources of ignition such as welding, flame cutting, and propane heating.
- Post signs to warn workers of hazardous areas.
- Wear eye protection at all times when there is any risk of eye injury.

Demonstrate

Review any housekeeping problems relevant to your crew. Discuss housekeeping problems on other areas on site.

Review procedures for cleaning up and show workers the location of garbage bins. Assign individual cleanup duties if required.