

# HOUSEKEEPING 1

## SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Good housekeeping is the first law of accident prevention and should be a primary concern of all supervisors, foremen and the entire workforce. Poor housekeeping often results in unsafe conditions and also implies that the project is poorly managed and the work being done lacks professionalism. Many accidents and injuries charged to other causes are actually caused by unsafe conditions due to poor housekeeping. A safe worker knows he can do his best work easier and more quickly if good housekeeping is maintained.

Learning the habit of good housekeeping takes practice. The familiar expression “a place for everything and everything in its place,” will assist you in your efforts. Materials left on the job should be stored in a central location and if at all possible stacked out of the way. When cleaning up be sure that all combustible materials are disposed of proper so as to curtail the possibility of fires. Tripping accident's can be reduced significantly by frequent clean-ups. Make it a habit to remove or bend over all nails protruding from scrap lumber to protect against puncture wounds. Sharp-edged and pointed tools should be stored in such a way as to prevent injuries. Each member of the crew has a responsibility to insure good housekeeping in all phases of their work. It's a lot easier to pick up as you work instead of waiting for the end of the shift.

The importance of the relationship between an orderly job and a safe job cannot be overstressed. We can have clean, well appearing, accident free jobs only if we really want them and insist that everyone cooperates. Good housekeeping requires constant effort and vigilance to make certain the job and equipment are kept in good condition. Are you doing your part? Remember, good housekeeping promotes safety in the workplace, improves performance, protects you and the public, and just makes good sense. A simple definition of safety is protecting yourself, other people and equipment from hazards.



# HOUSEKEEPING 2

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“A clean job is a safe job” is an old saying that has been around for many years. You may or may not agree completely with the saying, but if you have ever worked at a construction project that was cluttered with scrap material, you do know that good housekeeping plays a big part in maintaining a safe worksite.

OSHA Regulation 29 CFR 1926.25 Housekeeping requires that “During the course of construction, alteration, or repairs, form and scrap lumber with protruding nails, and all other debris, shall be kept cleared from work areas, passageways, and stairs in and around buildings or other structures. Combustible scrap and debris shall be removed at regular intervals during the course of construction. Safe means shall be provided to facilitate such removal. Containers shall be provided for the collection and separation of waste, trash, oily and used rags, and other refuse. Containers used for garbage and other oily, flammable, or hazardous wastes, such as caustics, acids, harmful dusts, etc. shall be equipped with covers. Garbage and other waste shall be disposed of at frequent and regular intervals.”

Housekeeping starts at the beginning of the shift and needs to continue throughout the entire workday. Don't let scrap materials build up; dispose of them daily. Another common housekeeping problem arises with the use of welding leads, air compressor hoses, and extension cords. If placed improperly they become tripping hazards. Keep walkways free for passage. When stripping forms remember to pull the nails out or bend them over. A protruding nail can cause a nasty puncture wound. Scrap cardboard and packing materials left lying around provide excellent fuel for fires. Pop cans, lunch bags and food scraps or wrappers will attract rodents. Avoid potential fire and health hazards by disposing of these items properly.

Housekeeping is a never ending process. Do your part by keeping your work area and adjacent walkways and stairs clean and orderly. No doubt about it - if everyone does their share, good housekeeping will make your job a safer job!



# HOUSEKEEPING 3

## SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

As each of us works throughout the jobsite, our daily needs require extension cords, air compressor hoses, cutting torch hoses and welding leads. Each of these cords or hoses acts as an umbilical cord providing us with the necessary electricity, compressed air, acetylene, oxygen, grounds for welding, and power for the welding stinger. The danger here is that any of these leads can become tangled and create tripping hazards if they are not placed properly before you start work. We must take the time to run them underneath walkways, overhead if needed, away from access doors and ramps, and away from pinch points. Leads and hoses are subject to cuts, abrasions, puncture and plain old normal wear and tear. Remember to run leads, cords and hoses out of the way, cover them properly and most of all, do not let them become tripping hazards.

There are many other objects around the work area that are just as dangerous. Have you ever stepped on a screwdriver or a short piece of pipe and felt your feet about to slip out from under you? Did you ever trip over a shovel carelessly left on the ground? Have you ever thought of how well a wire snare works in catching small or large animals? How about your foot! We must take time to pick up long pieces of tie wire; if not, you may be the next one that is snared. All of the above can be solved if we do a little housekeeping while we work. Cleaning up at the end of the job is fine, in fact it is essential, but job cleanup is not a one shot proposition, it is a continuous operation. It is an important factor in construction efficiency and in the prevention of work injuries.

Remember these tips - store material and tools neatly cleanup scrap as work progresses, keep walkways clear at all times, and take care of your tools Do not leave them where they will cause you or others to fall. Good jobsite housekeeping promotes efficiency and morale, and helps to reduce accidents. The injury you prevent may be your own!

