

Housekeeping

Why it's important

Housekeeping is not just a good idea, it's the law. On-the-spot tickets can be issued by a Ministry of Labour inspector for housekeeping infractions.

Housekeeping-related injuries can be caused by:

- tripping over objects or material on floors, stairs and platforms
- being struck by falling objects
- slipping on surfaces that are wet or dirty
- striking against objects that are poorly stored or in the wrong place
- puncturing or cutting skin from contact with protruding wire, nails or steel strapping

Poor housekeeping can have an impact on worker morale. Work debris and obstructions could also affect the evacuation of employees in the event of an emergency.

How to control the hazards

Injuries can be avoided when there is an effective housekeeping program in place:

- Make sure supervisors understand their legal requirement to enforce housekeeping standards.
- Make sure tools, equipment and supplies are put away after a project is completed.
- Add housekeeping to the monthly inspection form if it isn't already on it. Obstructions and overly congested areas should be dealt with promptly.
- Post signs that stress the importance of maintaining a tidy workplace and explain the cost of replacing broken or lost tools that have not been stored properly.
- Use painted lines on the floor to indicate exits and aisles and keep these areas free of debris and obstructions.
- Provide appropriate receptacles for all types of debris and waste.

- Designate one or more persons who are responsible for cleanup.
- Provide cleanup time at the end of each shift, day or week.
- Use downtime (while repairs or adjustments are made) for cleanup.
- Provide hangers to ensure that tools such as brooms and shovels are properly stored.
- Make sure absorbent materials and the proper personal protective equipment are readily available for clean-up of liquid spills by properly-trained personnel.
- Implement workplace incentive programs that include housekeeping.
- Train staff to understand the significant cost of non-production wastes (such as plastic materials) being mixed in with the wood products.

Show and tell

Do a walkthrough prior to the Talking Safety presentation, noting any housekeeping issues so that you can discuss them with participants.

Take the meeting group through the workplace and ask them to point out any housekeeping issues they see.

Notes:
