

# Housekeeping

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Today we'll talk about housekeeping. Some people think it's a waste of time. But if you spend five minutes picking up junk and litter, you might keep someone from slipping or tripping. You could prevent an injury that keeps them off work for weeks or even months. Five minutes to save months off work, it's a good investment. And next time, it could be you who gets hurt. Housekeeping is everyone's job, every trade, every worker, every supervisor. And it's a job you should do every day not just once a week or when a project is over. The first rule is to do your work neatly in the first place, and clean up after yourself. Good housekeeping does more than prevent injuries it can save you time, and it can keep your tools from being lost, damaged, or destroyed. You or a crew member may want to add a personal story about the hazards of poor housekeeping.

Next, discuss with the crew any housekeeping problems you have found at this particular job site:

---

---

## Ask the Crew these Questions

After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.

### 1. What can you do to prevent slips, trips, and falls?

- If you see a mess that someone else left, take care of it. Don't wait for the guy who left it to clean it up. Pick up anything you see lying around, especially if it could trip someone or fall on them.
- If you find someone's tools or equipment around, move them out of the way. Put them somewhere safe, but visible.
- Immediately clear scrap and debris from walkways, passageways, stairs, scaffolds, and around floor openings.
- Make sure the ground is level and well-graded within six feet of buildings under construction.
- Keep storage areas and walkways free of holes, ruts, and obstructions.

- Clean up spills of grease, oil, or other liquids at once. If it's not possible, cover them with sand or some other absorbent material until they can be cleaned up. Someone might slip.
- Coil up extension cords, lines, welding leads, hoses, etc. when not in use.
- Make sure there's adequate lighting. If a light is out, report it. Replace it immediately if you can.

2. Besides slips, trips, and falls, what other kinds of injuries can good housekeeping prevent?

- Cuts from nails or fasteners - If nails are protruding from surfaces, remove them or at least bend them down. Remove nails or fasteners when opening crates, cartons, kegs, or when stripping small forms. Remove or bend down nails before discarding scrap material.
- Fires and burns - Immediately remove combustible debris and materials from buildings and structures. Get them off the site promptly. Keep containers of flammable liquids tightly closed. Store flammables in approved cabinets. Dispose of them in separate waste containers, not with other trash.
- Head and body injuries - Don't throw materials, waste, or tools from buildings or structures to an area where workers may be located. If any object is protruding at head height, remove it or flag it. Make sure there are protective caps on exposed rebar.

3. When you stack material, how high can the stack be?

No higher than 7 feet for bricks, 16 feet for manually stacked lumber, and 20 feet for mechanically stacked lumber. Explain any other stacking height limits on this site:

---

---

4. What are some other rules to keep in mind when you stack material?

Before you stack new or scrap construction material, figure out how the stack should be arranged. That makes it easier when the time comes to break it down. Stack everything neatly. Make sure there's clearance around the stack, so workers or equipment will have enough room when they break it down. Make sure the stack is on a firm, stable surface that can hold the weight. Make sure piled or stacked material is stable so it won't fall, slip, or collapse.

5. Reinforce the stack to stabilize it.

You can:

- Taper back the face of the stack (for bags, sacks, bricks, or masonry blocks).
- Tie the stacked material in horizontal layers (for bags or sacks).
- Use headers every sixth layer in the stack (for bricks, tiles, or masonry blocks). Use headpieces or crosspieces (for lumber).

6. How can you protect yourself when handling scrap material?

Follow all the stacking rules we just discussed. Wear heavy gloves and safety shoes when you handle scrap material. Before you pile up material for disposal, remove or bend down any nails or fasteners.

7. Good housekeeping includes good sanitation. What sanitary facilities are we required to have on the site?

Enough clean, private toilets, toilet paper, washing areas with soap and water, enough pure drinking water (from fountains or single-use cups). (Water that isn't drinkable must be labeled.) Point out sanitary facilities on this site (if not obvious):

---

---

## **OSHA Regulations**

Most of the safety measures we've talked about are required by OSHA. We have to take these precautions, it's the law. I have a Checklist of the OSHA regulations on housekeeping. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting.

## **Company Rules**

(Only if applicable.) Besides the OSHA regulations, we have some additional company rules about housekeeping.

Discuss company rules. Be sure to include specific instructions on where to stack or store materials, proper disposal and cleanup methods, etc.:

---

---

## **GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW**

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

## **ENDING THE MEETING**

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

---

---

Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

---

---

### **Comments**

---

---

## **SAFETY TALKS REVIEW** Hazard Identification, Removal, and Cleanup:

1. The company has a written Safety and Health Program that meets all OSHA requirements. It includes identification of hazardous housekeeping problems on the site, regular inspections, accident investigation, and correction of hazardous conditions.
2. Debris is cleared from work surfaces, passages, and stairs.
3. Ground within 6 feet of a building under construction is free of irregularities.
4. Storage areas and walkways are reasonably free of dangerous depressions, obstructions, and debris.
5. All walking and working surfaces are reasonably dry and free from grease or oil.
6. Spills of oil, grease, and other liquids are removed at once, or covered with sand or other absorbent material until cleaned up.
7. Sufficient waste or trash containers are provided, used and emptied when appropriate.
8. Workers wear heavy gloves and heavy soled or safety shoes when handling scrap material.
9. All walking and working surfaces are free of protruding nails.
10. Nails or fasteners are removed when opening crates, cartons, kegs, or when stripping small forms.
11. Nails are bent down or removed before scrap material is discarded.
12. Scrap and debris are piled neatly.
13. Materials, waste, or tools are not thrown from buildings or structures to areas where workers may be located.
14. Any object protruding at head height has been removed or flagged.
15. Protective caps are used on exposed rebar.

## **Bulk Material Storage**

1. All piled or stacked material is stable and cannot fall, slip, or collapse.
2. The face of a pile of bags (containing cement or other material) more than 5 feet high is tapered back, or the sacks are tied in horizontal layers to prevent them from falling or collapsing.
3. Lumber piles are no more than 16' high if handled manually or 20' high if handled by equipment. Headpieces, crosspieces, or other means are used as needed to prevent slipping, tipping, or collapsing.
4. Piles of bricks, tiles, masonry blocks, and similar materials are stabilized by the use of headers at least every sixth layer.
5. Brick stacks are not over 7 feet high. Brick stacks over 4 feet high are tapered back.
6. Masonry stacks over 6 feet high are tapered back.

7. The way that material is going to be taken off the pile is planned at the time the material is first stored.
8. Workers and their equipment have room to move material off a pile.
9. Material is piled on surfaces that will hold its weight.
10. Material is piled on ground stable enough for a heavy load (not too near an excavation).
11. Pipe or rod is stored in racks if more than one layer high.
12. Surplus materials are returned to the stockpile.

## **Hazardous Material Storage and Disposal**

1. Flammable material is always stored in separate closed containers.
2. Incompatible chemical products (which may cause a hazardous reaction if they come in contact) are not stored together.
3. Smoking is prohibited in flammable liquid storage areas.
4. Flammable liquids are not stored near sources of ignition (sparks, electricity, flames, or hot objects).
5. Where more than 25 gallons of flammable liquids are present, they are kept in a storage cabinet approved by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
6. Indoor storage areas for flammable liquids are ventilated and have one clear aisle, at least three feet wide.
7. Flammable liquids stored outdoors are at least 50 feet from the property line and 10 feet from any public way. (Requirements change for very large quantities.)
8. Outdoor flammable liquid storage areas are graded to divert spills away from buildings.
9. Flammable and combustible scrap, debris, and waste are removed promptly from buildings or structures.
10. Covered metal waste cans are available for oily and paint-soaked waste.
11. Appropriate cleanup materials are available for leaks or spills of flammables or other hazardous materials.
12. Leftover hazardous products and waste are properly stored, labeled, and disposed of according to the instructions on the product's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

## **Sanitation**

1. Toilets and washing facilities are clean and sanitary. Toilets are designed to ensure user privacy, and are supplied with toilet paper.
2. Sufficient toilets and washing facilities are available.
3. Adequate supplies of potable water are available.
4. Drinking water is stored and dispensed in clearly marked containers that are not used for any other purpose.

5. Drinking water is dispensed from fountains, or single service cups are supplied.
6. All pipes and containers for non-potable water have been clearly labeled, and only potable water is used for washing, drinking, or cooking.
7. Change rooms (if required) are clean without accumulated dirty clothes, food, or food containers.

## **Environment**

1. Lighting and ventilation are adequate.
2. Burned out lights are reported and replaced.

## **Work Practices**

1. Housekeeping occurs constantly on the job, not just once a week or at the end of the project.
2. Everyone does housekeeping, not just laborers.
3. Workers pick up anything they see lying around that can trip a person or fall on them.
4. Extension cords, lines, welding leads, hoses, etc. are coiled up when not in use.
5. Tools are returned to the gang box or tool room.