

Toolbox Talk

Housekeeping

Probably the most basic yet fundamental rule for a safe job site: Keep your worksite organized and the walking paths clear. It is so important and easy that it is on the very first page of the OSHA General Health and Safety Provisions.

29 CFR 1926.25 - *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.*

What are the Hazards

Most accidents happen because of poor planning. An unorganized jobsite can lead to a variety of injuries such as:

- Tripping on scrap wood, extension cords, hoses, or loose materials.
- Being hit by a falling object. Materials improperly stored or scraps left at a higher level from a previous task.
- Slipping on a greasy, oily, or otherwise slippery surface
- Contact injuries, like being cut from bumping into a scrap pile that has been building up.

Housekeeping is an ongoing process. Part of a morning start up may be to pick up the mess left from the previous day, and planning the best place for a trash pile. Or clearing the snow and ice that was dumped overnight. Throughout the day maintaining a clear workspace helps with productivity, when you don't have to focus on what is underfoot you can get a lot more work done.

How To Do It

1. Keep it Clean
 - a. During construction keep all scrap lumber and debris clear from work areas and walkways.
2. Pull Nails
 - a. Pull or bend all protruding nails and screws from scrap lumber or removed bracing.
 - b. Designate a trash/debris area to toss all discarded lumber. This area should be intentionally out of the walking path or barricaded to prevent people from accidentally walking into it.
3. Clear Walking Paths
 - a. Keep walking and working surfaces clear of snow, ice, standing water, loose stone, or other slipping/tripping hazards.
 - b. All cords and hoses should be kept neatly to the side of the walking paths.
 - c. Cords and hoses running up stairwells should be tacked to the side walls to prevent tripping.
4. Separate Containers for Combustibles
 - a. A separate container should be used to dispose of flammable liquids or chemicals. (including oil soaked rags or paint materials and equipment)
 - b. Containers for combustibles need to have a lid or cover.

That is the best advice you need to run a successful, productive, and safe construction site. Keeping a clean site breeds productivity, pride, and promotes a sense of safety for everyone else around you.