

TOOLBOX TALK: HOUSEKEEPING

Job or site _____

Date _____

Led by _____

Open with this

Look at the floor where you are standing. If you had to walk backward carrying a sheet of plywood right now, what would you go over?

The talk

Slips, trips and falls on the same level are the injuries nobody respects, and they are the ones that fill up the log. A twisted knee, a broken wrist, a head on a stud. All of them from something on the floor that was going to be picked up later.

The reason it is worse in construction is that everybody is carrying something. You cannot see your feet with a sheet of drywall in your hands, so the floor has to be clear before you start, not after you trip.

Nails and screws in scrap. Every piece of pulled trim, every offcut of sheathing and every broken pallet is a puncture waiting to happen. Bend them over or pull them, and get scrap into a container the same day, not into a pile in the corner.

Cords and hoses are the trip hazard we create ourselves. Run them along walls and around the perimeter, not across doorways and walking routes, hang them where you can, and pull them back when the tool is done.

Combustibles are the other half of housekeeping. Sawdust, cardboard, rags with finish on them, plastic wrap and foam offcuts. A pile of that next to a heater, a light or hot work is an actual fire, and rags with oil based finish can heat up on their own and ignite without any source at all. Those go in a sealed metal can.

The rule that works is clean as you go. Fifteen minutes at the end of the day, every day, beats a half day cleanup on Friday, and it means Monday starts on a floor you can walk across.

Point at these before anybody starts

- The walking routes: from the door to the work, and from the work to the saw
- Cords and hoses lying across any route people use
- Scrap with nails and screws in it, and where the container is
- Sawdust, cardboard and packaging, especially near heaters and lights

- Any rags with oil based finish on them and what they are being stored in
- Stairs and landings, which are where debris does the most damage

The rules that apply

- Clear scrap, debris and packaging at regular intervals during the shift, not only at the end.
- Keep walkways, stairs, landings and exits clear at all times.
- Bend over or pull nails and screws in scrap lumber the moment it comes off.
- Route cords and hoses along walls and overhead, never across doorways or walking routes.
- Store combustible scrap in covered containers and rags with oil based finish in sealed metal cans.
- Clean as you go, and finish the shift with the floor walkable.

Ask the crew

- What is on this floor right now that somebody is going to go over today?
- Where does the scrap actually go on this job, and does everybody know?
- Who is doing the last fifteen minutes today?

Close with this

Clear routes, cords out of the way, scrap in the container, nails bent over. Fifteen minutes at the end of every day.

Attendance

Everybody who was present signs, including subcontractors and anybody visiting the site.

	Print name and signature
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This talk is general safety information for a crew briefing, not legal advice and not a substitute for the training your employees are required to have. Standards are quoted for orientation only. Check the current text of the standard and your own state plan, which may be stricter than the federal rule.