



045: Housekeeping

Why this is important

A messy place is a dangerous place. A clean work area promotes a safety mindset, while a sloppy work area only reinforces sloppy habits.

Results of good housekeeping

Improved efficiency.

Reduced rework and overtime, both of which lead to fatigue and inattention to safety.

Reduction or elimination of many types of slipping and tripping hazards.

Reduction in the spread of pathogens.

Prevention of poisoning.

Protection of equipment.

Housekeeping tips

Keep the work area free of tools and materials that are not in use. This reduces clutter and hazards from slipping or tripping.

Clean up spills and leaks immediately.

Sweep up pieces and scraps after stripping or terminating wires and after other activities that produce such debris.

If you smoke, remember that the floor is not an ashtray.

Put tools and materials away when these are not in use. This reduces time wasted looking for things.

Keep work areas free of trash, food scraps, and other items that attract rodents or provide a breeding ground for bacteria.

Dispose of any food immediately after a break or meal. If it sits out, it becomes a breeding ground for bacteria.

Do not eat or drink in work areas or around industrial processes. It is too easy to ingest contaminated food or beverages.

Observe good housekeeping rules on work platforms. Keep them free of debris and free of tools and materials not needed for the job at hand.

When on a platform, keep tools in a bucket or other high-sided container, so they are less likely to fall or be kicked off the platform. Make sure the container has a low center of gravity. You may need to place a large fitting or two in the bottom to help ensure this. It also helps to place tools in that container in a “handle up” orientation. This is one approach you can also use when working on the ground.

Ensure mats and rugs lie flat, and remove obstacles from pathways and aisles.

If you have leftover chemicals or solvents, put them only in permanently labeled containers, to avoid misapplication.

Housekeeping is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone benefits from it, and anyone can be hurt by someone else’s housekeeping failures.

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Walk through the work area and look for situations where housekeeping can improve. Make a list of these for the discussion.

What this Safety Talk covers:

Principles of effective housekeeping.

Discussion notes :

