

# Housekeeping

Week Number 14 (April 2– 8) 2017 Edition

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this safety talk, participants will be able to:

- Understand how poor housekeeping impacts jobsite safety
- Be familiar with ways to include good housekeeping in their everyday work tasks

Many people use the saying “a place for everything and everything in its place” to help keep their house clean. It can also easily be applied to a jobsite. Many accidents and injuries that occur are often blamed on other causes when they are really the result of unsafe conditions due to poor housekeeping. The best way to deal with housekeeping issues is to have everyone on the site clean as they go. This prevents debris from building up, reducing clutter in your work area and making cleanup a quick and manageable task.

Other general housekeeping tips include:

- Put tools and materials away when not in use. It reduces clutter and saves time that would be wasted looking for things.
- Always clean up spills and leaks immediately, this helps reduce slipping hazards.
- When stripping or terminating wires, sweep up pieces and scraps; short scraps are slipping hazards and long ones are tripping hazards.
- If you smoke, don't use the floor as an ashtray
- Dispose of food, trash and other items that might attract rodents or become a breeding ground for mold and bacteria.
- Ensure that any rugs or mats in your work area lie flat; this will help to reduce trip hazards.
- Remove obstacles that block (even partially) pathways and aisles. It makes walking around the jobsite easier and a bit safer as well.
- It's a good idea not to eat or drink in work areas; it's very easy to ingest contaminated foods or beverages without even realizing it.
- When working on a platform, keep them free of debris, tools and materials that aren't needed at that time.
- Keep tools in a high-sided container, like a bucket, when working on a platform. This will help minimize their chances of being kicked off or falling off the platform.
- Any leftover chemicals or solvents should only be put into permanently labeled containers to help avoid confusion and misuse.

A very common jobsite hazard arising from poor housekeeping is tripping hazards. It's easy to avoid creating them by working smart; anticipate how the task you're doing will produce a trip hazard and change how you do it to minimize the risk. For example, if a portable cord must be run across a walkway surface, secure it with a cord guard or tape it securely in place.

Other ways to reduce trip hazards include:

- Whenever possible, route portable cords overhead, away from foot traffic.
- If you have to run a cord on a walkway surface or stairway, run it to the side as much as possible and secure it with tape.
- When removing a cover from a conduit box, enclosure or panel, don't just put it on the floor. You should put it close to your work area but not someplace where it will be underfoot.
- It's helpful to use wire that's packaged without spools, this will eliminate many spool-related tripping incidents.
- When your wire is on a spool, use a spool rack. A spool with a piece of EMT stuck through it that's resting on the floor is a trip hazard.
- As part of a wire pull, it is sometimes necessary for you to lay the wires out on the floor. Be careful to prevent the wire from looping or curling and to keep people from walking across the wire.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In addition to increased jobsite safety, how do good housekeeping habits improve the jobsite?
- Why is eating or drinking on a jobsite unsafe when discussing housekeeping?
- How should portable cords be routed on walkways and stairways?
- What should be done before and after you remove a cover?