



Housekeeping in the Construction Industry

Companies that hold general housekeeping of work areas to high standard usually have a better safety culture than those companies who do not. Housekeeping is an important part of a robust safety program. Poor housekeeping promotes inefficiency as well as leads to injuries and property loss.

Poor housekeeping leads to:

- **Slip, trip, and fall injuries**
- Property damage incidents involving moving equipment or vehicles
- Caught in/between injuries
- Sprains/ strains due to unnecessary lifting and handling of objects that are in the way

Ways to improve the general housekeeping in your work area:

1. Create **lay down yards** for equipment and tools when out in the field. At the end of the task, return tools and equipment to their proper locations such as a workshop or toolbox.
2. Designate walking areas or paths for employees in work area and keep equipment and objects out of that path.
3. Designate parking areas within specific work areas to avoid clutter and vehicles or equipment striking objects around them.
4. Barricade or place orange fencing around objects or areas where equipment, vehicles, or people should not be. This also helps control points of access into work areas.
5. Keep tools and equipment clean. Heavy equipment should not have loose cargo such as trash in the cab. These items can be a distraction or interfere with the controls.

Summary

Paying attention to the small details translates to bigger changes in the safety culture in the field. Not only does good housekeeping help to lower property loss incidents as well as injuries, but it also shows the maturity of a safety culture within a company. Many of us work for a larger contractor or client in the construction industry and when your work areas are always clean and tidy it shows responsibility of your company to address the small issues onsite. Overlooking simple issues such as housekeeping can lead to big problems with injuries and property loss.

Discussion points:

- How can we improve the housekeeping in our work areas?
- How will improving the housekeeping in our work areas improve our work?