

Monthly Safety Shorts

Housekeeping on the Job

You have a pretty good idea how safe a job is just by looking at it before you start to work. A job that looks clean, with everything in its place, is a safe job. That's all we mean when we talk about job housekeeping. Good housekeeping calls for just two things:

- First: Keep trash and loose objects picked up - dispose of things properly.
- Second: Pile all materials and park all tools and equipment in the places where they belong.

These are the fundamentals of good housekeeping and they're simple enough. If we don't follow these two rules, we're letting ourselves in for trouble. Putting the rules to work is not so simple. A grand cleanup once a week won't do the trick. Housekeeping is a job that can't be put off. We have to do it. It's up to each individual to be their own job housekeeper.

When you see something lying around where it could trip an individual or fall on them, put it in a safe place. Don't wait for someone else to do it. If it's something that he or she will be looking for, you can put it safely where they can see it.

You've seen jobs, and probably worked on some, where it wasn't safe to put your foot down without first looking twice to be sure you weren't going to twist an ankle or run a nail through your shoe. A job like that is poorly run and badly managed. It's probably losing money as well as causing accidents.

Some jobs have walkways, aisles, stairs, and ladders by which you get from one place to another. It's particularly important that these lines of travel be kept safe and clear of loose objects. Workers often carry loads on these routes. They can't always pick their steps or look around to be sure that nothing is going to go wrong.

A wet or greasy walkway may cause a bad accident. If you see a treacherous spot, make it your business to do some sweeping, mopping or scraping. Brick, tile, pipe, steel rods and similar materials scattered about the job or insecurely piled on scaffolds or platforms can cause accidents.

All material should be piled in the place set aside for it. Each kind of material has its own characteristic. But some rules for piling apply to all kinds:

- First, you have to consider how the material is going to be taken out of the pile. If it's going to be a fast-moving operation with a big tonnage being unloaded in a short time, be sure to leave space for the worker and the equipment that will have to do the work.
- Be courteous. Never pile material in such a way that it will endanger a worker who has to work on it or will make a backbreaking job for the worker who breaks down the pile.

We all know the value of good lighting in job housekeeping. Poor lighting and accidents go together. When you find a light out, report it and get a replacement.

It's not hard to keep job clean if all useless materials, boxes, scrap lumber and other trash are picked up and removed regularly. Remember, if trash is allowed to accumulate for even a few days, the job becomes a messy and unsafe place to work.