

# >> TOOLBOX TALK - Housekeeping

Every year, poor housekeeping and storage account for a significant percentage of accidents and injuries in construction.

Garbage and debris can quickly accumulate on site—scrap lumber, broken bricks, pieces of drywall, strap bands, and packaging, etc.

You can't concentrate on work when you're worried about slipping, falling, or tripping over debris. Construction waste is often irregular in shape, hard to handle, and full of sharp objects. One of the biggest problems is packaging. Too often it gets removed from material and left wherever it falls. This too creates tripping and slipping hazards and also makes other hazards hard to see such as faulty wiring, protruding nails, damaged flooring and missing scaffold planks. Mess also makes it difficult to use material-handling equipment. As a result, more material gets handled manually, which increases the risk of injury and damage.



## Identify controls

Housekeeping means cleaning up scrap and debris, putting it in containers, and making sure the containers are emptied regularly. It also means proper storage of materials and equipment. Effective housekeeping and storage prevent accidents and injuries.

- Clean up as work proceeds.
- Keep equipment and the areas around equipment free of scrap and debris.
- Keep stairways, ramps, and other travel areas clear.
- Secure loose or light material stored on roofs and open floors to prevent it from blowing away in the wind.
- Never let material fall from any level of the project. Use an enclosed chute or lower the material in containers.
- Keep material away from floor and roof openings, roof edges, excavations and trenches.
- Store material so that it won't roll or slide in the direction of the opening. Use blocking if necessary.
- Before handling used lumber, remove or bend any protruding nails and chip away hardened concrete.
- Remove flammable rubbish and debris immediately from the vicinity of welding, flame cutting, propane heating, and other ignition sources.
- Do not allow material or equipment to be piled or stored under an overhead power line. Keep back the minimum distance of 18 feet (5.5 meters).

## Demonstrate

Review housekeeping problems unique to your crew.  
Discuss housekeeping problems on other on-site areas.

**Complete and attach Toolbox Meeting Form and process as per company policy.**

Content adapted for NLCSA, with permission, from toolbox talk by the Infrastructure Health & Safety Association (IHSA).

**TOOLBOX MEETING FORM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ No. in Crew: \_\_\_\_\_ No. Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

**Review Last Meeting:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Names of Attendees (Signature Required)</b>
<b>Topics Discussed (policies, practices, procedures, hazard assessment):</b>	
<b>Suggestions Offered:</b>	
<b>Action(s) to be Taken:</b>	
<b>Injuries/Accidents Reviewed:</b>	

**Supervisor's Remarks:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_