

One of the main causes of workplace injuries is poor housekeeping practices. Workplace housekeeping includes activities that create or maintain a clean, tidy, orderly, safe workplace. When we keep the workplace and worksites free of clutter and clean, we can massively reduce the risk of accidents. A clean and tidy workplace sets a good standard for the company. It shows you care about the small things and are, therefore, more likely to care about the bigger things when it comes to health and safety. In this housekeeping toolbox talk, we will go over the main housekeeping hazards and how you can minimize the risks.

Clutter

Clutter includes objects like equipment and tools left lying around on the floor, stairs, platforms, and other work surfaces. When this happens, staff can easily trip over, bump into things, and get hurt in other ways.

How to minimize the risk

- Never leave tools, equipment, and material laying around—especially not left unattended on floors, stairs, and other platforms.
- Only have the tools and equipment you need with you onsite.
- Only order and bring on site the materials you need.
- Use racks to better store equipment and materials.
- Make sure you stack and store equipment and other materials away from walkways and emergency exits.
- When equipment and materials are not in use, store them away safely to reduce tripping hazards.

Waste

Rubbish that accumulates in and around the worksite can become a hazard. Often, waste is sharp, hard to handle, and may have things such as nails sticking out of it.

How to minimize the risk

- The worksite should have designated rubbish areas. Make sure you put all waste in these areas.
- Make sure to bag and tie up lightweight waste, such as paper, so it doesn't blow around the worksite.
- Don't overload skips and rubbish bins.
- Always try to reduce the size of rubbish. For example, breaking down boxes.
- Make sure waste bins and skips are kept away from the public (especially toxic waste). Waste areas should be clearly marked.
- Always be aware of flammable waste when working—especially with tools.

Wet Surfaces

When surfaces like floors are wet, accidents are more likely to happen as people are more likely to slip. This isn't only caused by spilling liquids and not cleaning them up: it can also occur when the weather is bad.

How to minimize the risk

- Wear the appropriate footwear when on-site to avoid slipping.
- When you spill something, clean it up or, if necessary, arrange for someone else to.
- Inform your co-workers or members of the public (if applicable) of the hazard.
- When working outside, be aware of bad weather causing slip hazards such as muddy areas and wet floors.

Bad Lighting

If lighting is poor on a worksite, it can be dangerous as hazards may be difficult to see.

How to minimize the risk

- Ensure that your worksite is well lit. If not, don't work until it is.
- If appropriate, wear PPE if the risk is not fully minimized.
- If possible, use natural daylight.

Poor Hygiene

When facilities like kitchens and bathrooms aren't cleaned properly, this causes a health and safety hazard on the worksite.

How to minimize the risk

- Clean up after yourself when you've finished using the kitchen.
- Use designated bathrooms.
- Clean yourself when dealing with dangerous chemicals or if there is contact with other hazardous substances.
- Bathrooms and kitchens should be cleaned regularly.

Key Takeaways

- Don't leave equipment, materials, and tools laying around. Put things away after using them.
- Rubbish should never be left lying around the worksite. Use the appropriate bins and skips.
- Be careful around wet surfaces. If you spill something, clean it up or tell your supervisor.
- Always make sure there is good lighting before beginning work in an area of the worksite.
- Clean up after yourself to maintain high hygiene standards on the worksite.