

Housekeeping



Good housekeeping prevents accidents, protects workers, and reduces costs. A messy workplace shows poor safety commitment and site management. The Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) mandates safe workspaces and clear access at all times.

Awareness of hazards:

'Housekeeping' refers to managing a range of environmental conditions, including slippery surfaces, lighting, heating, ventilation, drainage, waste, storage of materials and tools, and accessibility.

Any floor or surface should not pose risks to workers health and safety during work time, or in an emergency. Uneven, wet, dusty, or littered floors are hazards creating slip, trip, and fall risks. Materials and waste are barriers to moving freely and dust can reduce sensory awareness and introduce health risks.

Understanding risks:

Clear access and egress are critical for emergency evacuations and emergency responses. Work areas should have enough space to allow workers to work

Eliminate or minimise risks (examples):

Risk controls focus on either the hazard or the behaviour of workers and others.

- **Eliminate the hazard.** Remove waste from site/unpackage off site. 'Lean' procurement.
- **Substitute the hazard.** Consider products with less packaging. Battery powered tools.
- **Isolate the hazard.** Clearly designated disposal areas for waste. Secure storage for hazardous materials. Clear storage areas for tools and equipment. Safe storage systems for materials.
- **Use engineered modifications.** Provide rubbish chutes. Ventilation systems. Festoon lighting. Storage rack systems for heavy objects/pipes/timber.

Focusing on human behaviours include:

- **Administration** of safe systems of work. Training and information for workers (e.g. SDS). Emergency drills. Site inductions. Tool box talks. Site audits. Tag and testing.
- **Personal protection equipment (PPE).** Cleaning equipment.

safely. Temporary electrical systems and lighting can cause trips, falls, and electrocution risks. Improperly stored materials can fall on workers and cause crush injuries.

Poor management of equipment, materials, and waste can be a safety risk. Accumulated rubbish and waste (e.g., timber offcuts) are flammable and increase fire risks – including toxic fumes (hazardous materials).

Chemical containers, tools, and materials should be stored safely. Hazardous materials may need to be separately stored (refer to safety data sheets (SDS)).

Safe behaviours include regular clean-ups and understanding chemical and biological hazards.

Unsafe behaviours include ignoring slip, trip, and fall hazards, and obstructing exits.