



Construction Management

Housekeeping on Construction Sites



Good housekeeping during construction operations is an essential function that can reduce accidents and improve overall safety performance on a job site, increase efficiency, aid public relations, improve morale. Suggestions that should help to establish a good housekeeping program will be addressed in this report.

Daily Operations

Immediately after debris or scrap has been created it should be cleaned up. Unsafe conditions are generally the cause of most accidents charged to other causes, such as tripping or slipping.

Boost of Workers' Pride and Morale

This leads to increased safety and improves worker dispositions. Workers on a well-kept job site take greater care and pride in their work, often resulting in increased efficiency. The supervisor should always set good examples.

Supervisor's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to check housekeeping conditions, have abnormal situations corrected as soon as possible, and see that workers maintain good housekeeping conditions. It is also their responsibility to plan for orderliness in their operations, issue definite instructions to their workers, and be adamant on cleanup after every job. A supervisor who picks up a piece of trash and places it in the trash can has effectively demonstrated good housekeeping to a worker.

For a good housekeeping program to be successful it must be well planned and coordinated. Housekeeping is a continuing process in which everyone should participate throughout the work day and should become a habit.

A Competitive Plan to Encourage Workers

Teams comprised of supervisors and workers can be established to inspect a site's housekeeping. These teams will typically be for a specified time period and circulate in order to include as many workers as possible. This team surveys the job site on irregular intervals, at least once a month, and grades each area on its housekeeping conditions. Usually, an award is given to the best area, and the poorest area may have some symbol of its disorderliness displayed. There can also be prizes of real value given to recommended employees and workers who provide management with good ideas can be given honored distinctions. This type of program is effective at creating interest in the desired objectives. Good housekeeping programs are never adequate to control occupational health hazards, but they are a good indicator of the health and safety interest supported by both management and workers.

This fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice

For additional information on this topic please contact ACWA JPIA Risk Control Department, Terry Lofing, Administrative Assistant (tlofing@acwajpia.com) or 800-231-5742



Disposal of Waste Materials

Since contractors produce many types of waste during the course of their work, (i.e., scrap lumber, demolition debris, trash, garbage and other refuse) it must be frequently collected and removed from the work area so that hazardous conditions do not develop.

Combustibles should be stored away from structures to reduce fire hazards. Harmful dusts or hazardous wastes such as oily rags, spent solvents, caustics or flammable liquids should be segregated from other waste and stored in approved, fire-resistant, covered containers in accordance with all applicable fire and environmental codes and regulations.

Removing waste materials and disposing of them properly will reduce the probability of accidents, injuries, and liability exposures.

OSHA Requirements

OSHA considers housekeeping to be a major indication of an owner's level of management. A careless housekeeping operation typically indicates a poor quality safety program.

OSHA standards set specific requirements that must be followed for housekeeping during construction, alterations or repairs and for the disposal of waste materials. All work areas, stairs and passageways must be kept clear of all scrap lumber and all other debris. During construction combustible scrap and debris must be removed at regular intervals.

How the waste should ultimately be disposed will vary from region to region. Since construction and demolition debris take up too much space, and may contain hazardous wastes, many landfills no longer accept construction and demolition debris, or require that rigorous testing be performed prior to disposal. Contractors should contact federal, state and local authorities to determine specific requirements.

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