

TOOLBOX TALK

# Housekeeping toolbox talk

About six minutes · CDM 2015, regulation 18

SITE

DATE

GIVEN BY

WHY IT MATTERS

Slips, trips and falls on the same level made up 30% of the injuries to employees that employers reported in Great Britain in 2024/25, more than any other kind of accident. On a building site most of them have the same story: there was something in the way. An offcut, a bag of waste, a lead across a doorway, a pallet left on a walkway, a stairwell with no light.

A trip sounds small. On site it means a broken wrist, a dislocated shoulder, a head against a scaffold tube, and someone off work for weeks. Nobody left the offcut there to hurt anyone. It was left because there was nowhere agreed to put it. This talk is about giving everything a place, and keeping the routes clear while the work goes on.

HSE, Non-fatal injuries at work in Great Britain (RIDDOR, 2024/25)

THE POINTS TO MAKE

- ☐ **Routes stay clear all day**  
Walkways, stairs, corridors, doorways and fire exits are kept clear while work is going on, not tidied at the end of the shift. If a route has to close for a task, a safe alternative is agreed and signposted before it closes. Nothing is stored on a stair or against a fire exit, even for ten minutes.
- ☐ **Clear as you go**  
Offcuts, packaging, banding, bags and rubble go in the skip or bin as they are made, not at the end of the day. A task is not finished until the area is as clear as it was found. The programme allows time for this, and if it does not, that is a planning problem to raise, not a reason to skip it.
- ☐ **Nails, sharps and edges**  
Timber with nails sticking out is not used, stacked or left anywhere it could hurt someone. Pull the nails or bend them flat before it goes in the stack or the skip. Broken glass, blades and banding strips go in a container, not in an open bag.
- ☐ **Spills, mud and water**  
A wet floor, mud walked in from outside, oil from plant or a leaking standpipe makes a slip of a route that was fine an hour ago. Clean it up or cordon it off straight away, and sort the cause: a scraper mat at the door, a drip tray, a repair.
- ☐ **Everything has a home**  
Before a trade starts, it knows where its materials are stored, where its waste goes and how the waste gets out of the building. If any of those three has not been agreed, ask before the first delivery arrives, not after it is sitting in the corridor.
- ☐ **Leads, hoses and cables**  
Leads and hoses across a route catch feet all day long. HSE says to run them at high level, especially along corridors. Where one must cross a route, put it under a proper cable protector. Use the nearest power point and coil what is not needed. Check leads for damage while you are at it.
- ☐ **Light to see by**  
A clear route is only clear if you can see it. Stairwells, corridors and basements need lighting that works, and emergency routes stay lit while anyone is on site. If a light is out or a task leaves a floor in shadow, report it and get a lamp in before anyone walks through.

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TOOLBOX TALK, CONTINUED

# Housekeeping toolbox talk: do, do not, and the questions

DO

- Keep every walkway, stair, doorway and fire exit clear while you work, not just at knocking-off time.
- Put waste in the skip or bin as you make it, and finish each task by clearing the area.
- Store materials in the agreed area, stacked stable and off the routes.
- Run leads and hoses overhead, along walls or under covers where they cross a route.
- Pull or flatten nails in used timber before it is stacked or skipped.
- Report blocked routes, missing lights, full skips and spills to the supervisor straight away.

DO NOT

- Do not leave materials, tools or waste on a stair, in a corridor or across a doorway, however briefly.
- Do not store anything against a fire exit, a fire point or an escape route.
- Do not run a lead or hose across a walkway without a cover, and do not step over one and leave it.
- Do not stack materials where they could topple onto a route or where someone must climb to reach them.
- Do not leave a spill, wet patch or muddy floor for the next person to find.
- Do not throw waste from height or push it out of an opening. Use a chute, a bin or carry it down.

ASK THE TEAM

- ? Where does your waste go today, and how does it get out of the building?
- ? Which route on this site is most often blocked, and what is blocking it?
- ? Where are leads and hoses crossing a walkway right now?
- ? Is there anywhere on this job where you cannot see the floor properly?
- ? If the skip is full or the route is blocked, who do you tell, and what happens next?

TO CLOSE

Nobody trips on purpose, and nobody leaves an offcut on a stair to hurt a mate. Trips happen when the plan has not given the mess a place to go, or has not given anyone the time to put it there. The routes, the skips and the storage are agreed. If any of it is not working on this job, tell me today and we will sort it.

**Record it.** Who gave the talk, where, when, who was there and what was raised. The last page is the record.

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

# Housekeeping toolbox talk: given and understood

Each person signs on the day to say they were present and understood the talk. Anyone who joins the team later is given the talk before starting, and signs here.

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| QUESTIONS RAISED, AND THE ANSWERS GIVEN | ACTIONS AGREED, WHO AND BY WHEN |       |
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| TALK GIVEN BY (SIGNATURE)               | POSITION                        | DATE  |
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MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1999, REGULATION 10: INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

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