

Proper Housekeeping

A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

DURING THE MEETING

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

Proper Housekeeping

- A clean work area is a must for an injury-free workday. Proper housekeeping will decrease the chance of an injury or accident, no matter what type of work is being done.
- A dock worker lost a total of 13 weeks of work because of debris left around the apron of a truck terminal. He jumped off the edge of the dock, taking a short cut instead of walking to the steps, and did not look before he jumped. A discarded pallet had been tossed over the edge of the dock between two trailers. When he landed on the pallet his right leg went out from under him. He broke his right ankle as he landed. He was back on the job after seven weeks and worked eight days before being injured again. This time he was switching trailers in the terminal yard. As he was hooking up a trailer at the dock, he walked around the trailer to remove the safety chocks from the wheels. A piece of pipe had been left on the ground near the trailer. He injured his right ankle when he stepped on the pipe. This time he lost six weeks of work. The lost wages, which will never be made up, surely presented a hardship for his family.
- Another worker was pushing a four-wheel cart on the dock. He could not see the oil spot in front of him. When he stepped in the oil he slipped and hit his head on a large metal casting, suffering a concussion that kept him off the job for 10 weeks.
- In another near catastrophe, dirt and debris had collected in the pit under the dock plate at a terminal. A discarded cigarette fell into the pit, starting a fire. Luckily, a worker nearby put out the fire before it could spread. This situation could have been worse, because the trailer was parked next to a shipment of flammable paint.
- Many fires are started from oil or debris that has collected in corners or pits where it might go unnoticed. A spark or ash from a cigarette could start a fire, which might be difficult to detect.

Whether it's simply walking to the steps of the dock or climbing into a cab, you should realize that housekeeping practices cannot be neglected. For example, it's a nice feeling to climb into a cab with no cigarette butts, pop bottles and cans, or crumpled paper containers on the floor or under the seat.

It also gives you a lift to see that all the glass is free of dirt, grease and dust. It's also important to leave the cab the same way for the next driver.

Good housekeeping is more than a nice feeling--it's a safer way to do things.

And it also helps prevent catastrophes, like a fire caused by tossing a cigarette butt into the pit, where papers and rags have been allowed to accumulate; or a near-miss caused by a bottle or can rolling under your feet after a turn or quick slowdown.

No matter what kind of work you do, clean and hazard-free work areas give you a feeling of pride in your job and yourself. As professionals, you know that by insuring your safety you are banking on an injury-free workday, because it's the only way to go.

Our families rely on us for a steady income. The best way to insure this is to keep our work area clean. The wages lost because of an accident is money lost forever. Every injury caused by housekeeping can be prevented if everyone helps to keep the work area clean. When discarding waste of any type, be sure to deposit it in the proper container. By keeping aisles clear and floors clean we can help to insure our safety by creating a safe and more productive work area.