



## KEEPING A CLEAN SHOP — EMPLOYERS AND SUPERVISORS

### The hazards of poor housekeeping

The purpose of this Crew Talk handout is to provide employers and supervisors with information to help protect their workers from injuries that can occur when good housekeeping practices are not in place. Many of the injuries that result from slips, trips, and falls are relatively minor, but they can be a costly problem for your shop if they occur frequently. In fact, over a recent five-year period, 676 woodworkers in British Columbia were off work as a result of falls.

Sawdust accumulation, pieces of wood debris, liquid spills, and trailing power cords are all potential causes of slips, trips, and falls. The buildup of sawdust around infeed and outfeed areas of machinery is especially hazardous.



*Disposal bins or cans need to be placed in convenient locations.*

### Maintaining a clean shop makes a difference

You can help prevent injuries and save your company time and money by implementing good housekeeping practices and ensuring that your workplace is well laid out.

- **Develop** safe work practices for workers to use when cleaning equipment and work areas.
- **Train** workers in general housekeeping practices and specific safe work procedures. Supervise workers from time to time to ensure that they are following procedures and working safely.
- **Ensure** that flooring has a non-slip surface in locations such as infeed areas, stairs, and ramps.
- **Ensure** that work areas are well lit so workers can see potential tripping hazards. Replace burned-out light bulbs.
- **Organize** work and storage areas. When ordering large amounts of stock, think about how you're going to store it. When ordering equipment, think about where to position it in the shop to maintain an effective work flow.
- **Complete** the Monthly Inspection checklist (see page 3) with your workers at least once a month.
- **Post** a sheet where workers can report issues such as storage problems and broken equipment.
- **Ensure** that everyone in the workplace cleans up after themselves.
- **Provide** time at the end of each workday for workers to clean and tidy up the shop.

## How to deliver a crew talk

Effective crew talks provide focused information on one topic in a short period of time, usually 15 minutes or less. Shorter talks are generally better, depending on the subject matter.

1. **Read** about work area requirements in sections 4.32 to 4.42 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. For a searchable electronic version of the Regulation, visit WorkSafeBC.com.
2. **Inspect** your shop to identify housekeeping issues and any potential slip, trip, or fall hazards. Use the housekeeping and storage checklists as guides.
3. **Find** examples of good housekeeping and poor housekeeping in your shop that you can use during your crew talk.
4. **Gather** your crew together to watch the slide show *Housekeeping in Woodworking*.
5. **Distribute** the *Keeping a Clean Shop* crew handout and the Housekeeping and Storage checklists to workers after watching the slide show.
6. **Use** the discussion topics included here when talking to your crew, as well as the crew handout.

## Discussion topics

1. **Cite** the WorkSafeBC statistics — during a five-year period, 676 woodworkers in B.C. were off work as a result of falls.
2. **Emphasize** the importance of good housekeeping. Tell workers that keeping the shop clean will help protect them against slips, trips, and falls.
3. **Explain** how slips, trips, and falls can occur. Discuss how air hoses can be a tripping hazard.
4. **Discuss** the housekeeping hazards specific to your shop, which may include accumulations of sawdust and other debris, air hoses, and cluttered walkways.
5. **Discuss** the importance of staying out of infeed and outfeed areas, and keeping them clear of materials.
6. **Explain** that airborne sawdust can cause respiratory problems. Tell workers not to use compressed air for cleaning. Whenever possible, they should vacuum instead of dry sweeping.
7. **Explain** how to stack lumber and other materials safely.

## HAZARD ALERT

### Don't become a statistic

#### Hand lacerations and amputation of two fingers

A worker lost two fingers when he tripped over an electrical cord and his hand contacted the running blade of a co-worker's saw.

#### Head injury

A worker suffered a severe head injury when he slipped on a sawdust-covered floor and struck his head on the corner of a work table. The injury required surgery and months of rehabilitation.

8. **Tour** the shop with your crew, and point out hazards. Use the examples of good housekeeping and poor housekeeping that you found when you inspected the shop before this crew talk.
9. **Ask** the crew what is safe and what might be a potential hazard in each housekeeping example.
10. **Remind** everyone to wear appropriate non-slip safety footwear.
11. **Explain** what has been done in your workplace to minimize the risk of slip, trip, and fall injuries (for example, cleaning procedures and improved flooring and lighting).
12. **Emphasize** that good housekeeping is mandatory and everyone's responsibility.
13. **Tell** workers to follow lockout procedures when cleaning equipment (for example, when cleaning in and around the infeed and outfeed areas of machinery).
14. **Cite** at least two true stories of injuries from your experience or that of the crew (or use the Hazard Alert on this page).
15. **Instruct** workers to identify and report any safety concerns about housekeeping hazards, using the checklists as their guide.
16. **Conduct** an inspection with the crew of housekeeping and storage areas in your shop.
17. **Answer** any questions or concerns the workers might have.





*Shelves and other storage units will help ensure that your shop stays clean and well organized.*

## Keep the ball rolling: Follow-up

Supervisors are responsible for training their workers in safe work procedures. After this crew talk, inform your workers that you will:

- **Observe** work activity to ensure that good housekeeping practices are being used consistently and correctly.
- **Support** positive behaviours when good housekeeping practices have been followed.
- **Correct** unsafe work practices when they are observed.
- **Acknowledge** when someone takes the time to clean up after a busy day, and hold them accountable when they don't clean up

## Monthly inspection checklist

Use the following checklist as part of your monthly inspections with management and worker representatives.

- Storage and disposal areas are clean and well organized. Identify alternative areas you can use if there is not enough space in these areas.
- There are appropriate containers, bins, racks, and shelves for storing materials. Make a note if you think there's a better storage solution for materials or equipment.
- Chemicals (for example, paints, laquers, and solvents) are properly labelled and stored.
- Personal work areas are kept clean and free of tripping hazards. Report any deficiencies at your next safety meeting.
- Equipment work surfaces are kept clean other than essential tools for operating equipment.
- New tools or equipment that arrived since the last inspection have been checked. Make sure there is appropriate storage space for them.
- Floors, platforms, and walkways are in good condition and free of slipping and tripping hazards such as air hoses, electrical cords, and debris.
- Aisles and work areas are not being used for storage.
- There is sufficient lighting for work areas. Make a note of any bulbs, tubes, or fixtures that need to be replaced or repaired.
- Access to emergency and first aid facilities is not blocked by equipment or materials.

