

## **FIVE-MINUTE SAFETY TALK NO**

### **Safe Housekeeping**

Most of you probably have house cleaning duties at home. For some of you it's a regular weekly chore. Whatever the case may be, you'll agree that good housekeeping practices are important in the home.

However, what we sometimes overlook is that good housekeeping is a key duty on the job, too. The orderly arrangement of work areas is vital to the safety of all workers, regardless of whether they are involved with machines and tools or with appliances and furniture.

It's a fact that over 14,000 persons are killed on the job annually in the United States, and an estimated 25,000 die in home accidents. On top of this, disabling injuries occurring at home and at work reach a combined total in excess of six million each year.

Three thousand of the on-the-job deaths are caused by falls, many of which result from just plain poor housekeeping practices. Falls often result from tripping over loose articles such as tools left in aisle ways and work areas. Wet spots on the floor or trash and other articles left on stairways also take their toll.

There are rubbish bins placed in several strategic areas, so there is no excuse for waste paper, drink bottles or cans, or other materials being thrown on the floor.

A word of caution. If a bottle should be broken on the floor, don't attempt to pick up the glass with your bare hands. Wear gloves or sweep up the pieces. The same procedure should be used for cleaning up nails and other sharp objects.

Let's face it, it is just a lot easier to do your job when your work area is kept neat. Keep your tools and equipment off the floor and stored in the proper places. This not only reduces tripping hazards but protects the equipment you use to earn a living with.

Did you ever go to the wardrobe at home to get something and have to pull it out from under some other articles? Things start falling over. It's a mess. But before you blow your cool, stop and think "how many times have I left stuff piled on top of other things when I was in a hurry to dig something else out of the wardrobe?"

The same principles apply when storing materials or equipment on the job. Take time to make the piles neat. It's unsafe to stack them too high, and, if possible, it's best to keep them away from other equipment or articles that are used often.

We have to be a lot like a full-back, keeping our eyes open for changes in the defense or certain other telltale moves of opposing players. On the job, we should keep a lookout for danger signals—loose flooring, articles out of place, or other unsafe conditions. These things should be corrected immediately, or notify me and I'll see that they're taken care of.

In closing, I'd like to emphasize that we're all dependent on each other for safety. It's up to each of us to hold up our end of the deal. When each of us keeps his own area in order, the whole operation is a safer place in which to work.

This information was developed by the Michigan (USA) Department of Labor, Bureau of Safety and Regulations, Safety Education and Training Division. To view this talk and more on-line, please visit [www.riskspace2000.com](http://www.riskspace2000.com)