



North Coast Schools' Insurance Group

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SERVING DEL NORTE COUNTY AND HUMBOLDT COUNTY SCHOOLS

Housekeeping for Safety

Most of us probably have house cleaning responsibilities at home. For some, it may be a set of regular weekly chores. Whatever the case may be, we can agree that good housekeeping practices are important at 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 school buses and students.

Approximately 6,000 persons are killed on the job annually in the United States, and an estimated 19,500 in home accidents. Seventeen percent 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 items such as tools left in aiseways and work areas, wet spots on the floor, or trash and other articles left on the floor.

During periods of wet weather, water tracked-in from outdoors is a serious problem. Wet spots cause slips and falls and should be cleaned up immediately. Proper "wet floor" signage should also be used when necessary.

Trash receptacles should be placed in several strategic areas to minimize the chance of any waste being thrown on the floor. 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.

It is both safer and easier to perform your job when your work area is kept neat. Tools and equipment should be kept off the floor and stored in the proper places. This not only reduces tripping hazards but protects the equipment from damage. When storing materials or equipment on the job, take time to make the piles neat. It's unsafe to stack the items too high and, if possible, it's best to keep them away from other equipment or articles that are used often.

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 a supervisor to see that they are addressed. We are 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 their own area in order, the whole workplace is a safer zone.

