

Housekeeping: Clear Paths and Safe Work Areas

COMPANY

PROJECT

DATE

PRESENTED BY

General construction crews share walkways, stairs, and work areas with other trades. Scrap, loose cords, and trash can turn those shared spaces into hazards, especially when someone is carrying materials. Keeping the site clear is part of doing the work, not just a cleanup task at the end.

Keep Travel Paths Clear

- Keep debris out of work areas, passageways, and stairs during the work. This includes areas inside and around buildings, not just the space where your crew is working.
- Look along your route before carrying tools or materials. If scrap blocks the way, clear it safely before moving through. Do not step over a pile with your view blocked.
- Remove scrap lumber and form lumber with protruding nails from work areas and travel paths. Watch for nails while handling it, and place the lumber where it will not create another hazard.
- Do not push debris from one crew's area into another crew's path. If you cannot safely clear an obstruction, stop using that route and tell the foreman what needs attention.

Manage Scrap and Waste

- Remove combustible scrap and debris at regular intervals. Wood scraps and other material that can burn should not keep building up while work continues.
- Use the provided containers to collect and separate waste, trash, oily and used rags, and other refuse. Know which container is intended for the waste you are handling.
- Containers for garbage and oily, flammable, or hazardous waste must have covers. Use the appropriate covered container rather than leaving these wastes loose in a work area.
- Waste must be disposed of frequently and regularly, with safe means available for removal. Report missing containers or an unsafe removal route instead of making a new pile beside the stairs.

Keep Cords Out of Trouble

- Plan cord routes so walkways and stairs stay clear. Do not leave loose loops where people walk or drag cords through scrap lumber and sharp debris.
- Protect flexible cords from damage. Avoid sharp corners and projections. Where a cord passes through a doorway or another pinch point, provide protection against damage.
- Use three-wire extension cords designed for hard or extra-hard use with portable tools. Ask the foreman if you cannot tell whether a cord is suitable.
- Do not use damaged or defective electrical equipment; report it for repair. Do not hang temporary lights by their cords unless the lights and cords are designed for that purpose.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You are about to carry materials upstairs. Nail-studded scrap sits on a landing, and an extension cord runs beneath it through a doorway. What would you clear, check, and report before using that route?

Questions for the crew

1. Which areas must stay clear while work is underway?
2. Which waste containers need covers?
3. How do you protect a cord passing through a doorway?

Keep paths clear, collect waste properly, and stop and report hazards you cannot safely correct.

Sources: 29 CFR 1926.25, Housekeeping; 29 CFR 1926.404, Wiring design and protection; 29 CFR 1926.405, Wiring methods, components, and equipment for general use

Drafted with AI for review by a competent person. Clever Rook writes from the official regulation text it cites, but it doesn't know your site. Check it against your conditions and your company's safety program before use. Not legal advice.

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REVIEWED BY (COMPETENT PERSON)

REVIEW DATE

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