WEEK 12 MARCH / SPRING CLEAN-UP · ~5 MIN READ · ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION

Housekeeping & Site Organization

A worker carries a sheet of plywood across the deck, can't see his feet, and trips on a loose offcut. Many of the "freak accidents" on a site are really just housekeeping that got away from everyone.

The hazard

As the snow goes, everything it covered comes back: cut-offs, banding, cords, broken pallets, broken fencing. Cluttered walkways and work areas cause trips, punctures, and fires, and they block the way out when something goes wrong. Ontario doesn't leave this to good manners — waste and debris have to be removed to a disposal area as often as needed to stop a hazard building up, and **at least once a day**. Reusable material goes to a storage area, not into a pile in the walkway.

What to do

- **Clean as you go, and clear it daily.** The once-a-day floor is the minimum, not the target — if it's creating a hazard at ten in the morning, it goes then.
- **Deal with protruding nails and rebar properly.** Anything sticking out that could hurt someone gets **pulled, cut off flush, or otherwise protected**, as soon as it's practical. Flipping the board nail-down isn't one of those — the nail is still there and the next person to move it finds out.
- **Don't drop material between levels.** Rubbish and debris come down by chute, in a container, or by crane or hoist — not over the edge.
- **Keep walkways, stairs, ramps, and exits clear at all times**, and don't use them as storage. Routes have to stay clear of obstructions and of snow, ice, and anything else slippery, and get sanded when footing needs it.
- **Route cords and hoses properly, not creatively.** Off the walking route, supported on something rated for it, following the site plan — without creating a new overhead hazard, blocking egress, or hanging a cord off something electrical. A lead slung over a pipe is a fix that becomes a hazard.
- Use the right bins, keep them from overflowing, and put oily rags in a covered metal can rather than a heap.
- Keep work areas and the routes to them adequately lit — you can't avoid what you can't see.

Watch out for

- Material stacked too high, or close to edges and openings.
- Trip hazards buried in spring mud. Re-walk the paths after a thaw.
- Melt uncovering last fall's cords, rebar, and stakes.
- The pile that everyone steps around instead of clearing, because it's nobody's.

Talk it over

- Which area here is worst for clutter right now, and who owns clearing it today — not at the end of the week?
- Where do our cords and hoses cross a walking route, and how do we get them out of it properly?

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