Site Housekeeping Toolbox Talk

Key points, do's and don'ts, and questions with answers. The attendance sign-off sheet is on the last page.

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Key points to cover

- Clean as you go — every worker is responsible for keeping their work area tidy throughout the day
- Clear waste materials regularly — do not let them accumulate in work areas or walkways
- Store materials properly — stack on level ground, within safe height limits, and away from edges and walkways
- Keep all access routes, stairways, and fire exits clear and unobstructed at all times
- Manage waste segregation — separate general waste, timber, metal, and hazardous waste into the correct skips
- Good housekeeping prevents fires — combustible waste near hot works or electrical equipment is a major fire risk

Do's and don'ts

Do

- Clean as you go — tidy up after each task, not just at the end of the day
- Stack materials on firm, level ground and secure against collapse
- Keep fire exits, access routes, and emergency assembly points clear at all times
- Separate combustible waste from hot work areas and electrical panels
- Coil and store hoses and cables when not in use

Don't

- Never let waste accumulate in work areas or walkways
- Never stack materials higher than the safe stacking limit or close to excavation edges
- Never leave nails protruding from discarded timber — bend them over or remove them
- Never block skips with vehicles or materials so that waste cannot be deposited
- Never leave loose materials on scaffold platforms or near edges where they could fall

Questions to check understanding

Ask each question and let the crew answer before you read out the answer.

Q1. Why is good housekeeping considered one of the most important safety measures?

Answer: Because poor housekeeping is a contributing factor in many common site incidents including slips, trips, falls, fires, and struck-by injuries. Good housekeeping eliminates these hazards at source, costs very little to implement, and creates a culture of care that improves overall site safety.

Q2. What is the 'clean as you go' principle?

Answer: It means tidying your work area continuously throughout the day as each task is completed, rather than allowing waste and materials to accumulate for a single clean-up at the end of the shift. This keeps hazards from building up and ensures the site is always in a safe condition.

Q3. How does poor housekeeping contribute to fire risk?

Answer: Accumulated combustible waste (timber offcuts, packaging, rags) near hot work areas, electrical panels, or heat sources can easily ignite. Blocked fire exits prevent safe evacuation. Overloaded waste containers can self-combust in hot weather. Regular waste removal and separation of combustibles from ignition sources is essential.

Q4. Whose responsibility is housekeeping on a construction site?

Answer: Every worker on site. While the principal contractor has the overall duty to maintain good order under CDM 2015, every individual is responsible for keeping their own work area tidy, disposing of waste correctly, and reporting hazards. Housekeeping is a shared responsibility.

Attendance sign-off sheet: Site Housekeeping Toolbox Talk

Everyone who attended prints their name and signs to confirm they received this talk.

Date _____ **Time** _____

Site or location _____ **Presented by** _____

No.	Name (print)	Company	Signature
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Presenter's signature _____

This is general guidance for UK construction sites. Check it against your own risk assessment, method statement and the site before you deliver it. Toolbox talk from The Site Book, reviewed 26 October 2026. Read it online at thesitebook.co.uk/toolbox-talks/housekeeping.