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The National Safety Council saves lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the roads through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Visit us at [nsc.org](http://nsc.org) for up-to-date industry news, information and tools to take your safety program to the next level.



### NSC Safety Awards

Participation in the NSC Awards Program is the safe decision for your employees and the smart decision for your bottom line.

Safety awards from NSC instill employee pride; earn respect from your customers, community and peers; and place you one step ahead of your competition. [Learn more.](#)



Welcome to *Spotlight on Safety*, an e-newsletter brought to you by the Department of the Interior Office of Occupational Safety and Health in partnership with the National Safety Council. We hope you will find this service of value. Send feedback or ideas on topics you would like to see to [membershipinfo@nsc.org](mailto:membershipinfo@nsc.org). Please put "Department of the Interior feedback" in the subject line.

### Is Housekeeping a Dirty Word on the Job?

If you've ever lived with a small child, you understand how housekeeping can affect safety. That spoon or toy a child leaves on the floor may send someone sliding across the room or tumbling into the wall. The same is true in the workplace. When workers leave tools next to equipment, water on the floor, or boxes in walkways, these normally harmless items become hazards.

#### Take the cleaning quiz

Housekeeping and safety go together. Many housekeeping tips seem basic, yet they often go unheeded and cause thousands of injuries annually. Take an unannounced walk through your workplace and see if your housekeeping system really stands up. Keep a checklist to note:

- Are passageways kept clear?
- Does stacked material impede workers' vision?
- How often is combustible waste removed to minimize fire hazards?
- Are all aisles, walkways, traffic areas and exits kept free of stored materials?
- How conveniently placed are receptacles for waste and debris and are they covered?
- Are wet floors clearly marked and sectioned off?
- Are ventilation systems clear of dust and debris and not blocked by stored material?

Read more [tips](#) on housekeeping safety.

### Don't Ignore the Pain of a Sprain or Strain



While the old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," may be considered wise words in some businesses, that's definitely not the case when it comes to injuries in the workplace. Certainly a sprained ankle is not as serious as a broken one - but if you don't provide appropriate care, it could mean big headaches in terms of employee recovery, possible further injury and lost productivity. Therefore, it's

important to pay attention to sprains.

#### Combat sprains and strains with first aid

What's the best way to handle sprains and strains? Common first aid tips include:

- Remove or loosen clothing, jewelry or other constricting objects from around the joint.
- Apply a bag of crushed ice, a cold pack or cold compresses on the area. Change them several times with 20 minutes on and at least 30 minutes off for the first three or four hours and continue them for 24 hours.
- Elevate the injured area and try to avoid movement for at least 24 hours.
- Rest the injured joint while the pain persists.
- It may be appropriate to take an over-the-counter pain medication, such as aspirin or ibuprofen. Check with a doctor first.

#### Avoid sprains and strains

The ITT Hartford Insurance Group, a Connecticut-based company, recommends these procedures to help reduce strains and sprains:

- Modify job procedures to eliminate physical lifting.
- Use mechanical and other lifting devices if possible.
- Divide heavy loads into lighter loads.
- Bend the knees, not the back, when lifting.
- Carry loads close to the body.
- Do not turn or twist abruptly when lifting.
- Slide loads from one surface to the other with the same elevation.

[Read](#) the full article.