



What is *Common Ground*?

Common Ground shares practical ideas that address the top safety and health issues facing electricians.

Common Ground is based on real-world practices used by Washington electrical contractors.

Reduce on-the-job injuries: try at least one new idea from each of the 5 editions:

- Worksite Hazard Analysis
- Ladder Safety
- Working De-Energized
- ✓ **Housekeeping**
- Lockout/Tagout

If you have a safety idea that you would like to share, or to make comments about this publication, we would like to hear from you.

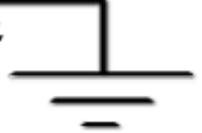
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rev 05/2022

Common Ground

*electricians connect
on safety & health*



What Washington State electrical contractors are saying about...

Housekeeping

Why Invest in Housekeeping?

A clean work site is a productive work site. Many managers have experienced that time and resources invested in housekeeping are returned to a company through efficiency. Good housekeeping reduces the risk of injury, keeping claim costs low.



"It's got to be part of their daily activities, as important as anything else they're doing. If you're keeping your work site clean, you may actually be organizing your mind, too, planning, thinking, and doing things efficiently."

-Manager, Electrical Contracting Firm

Eight simple housekeeping solutions

1. Provide enough garbage and recycling bins and empty them regularly.

"I've seen people carry out a handful of garbage and look at the dumpster and it's full. So what do they do? They find a place on the floor. They set it aside and that's where it sits until somebody else picks it up for them."

-- Electrician

2. Encourage workers to clean as they go.

"I usually have a tea cart and I keep a large box, say a caddy box or whatnot around to stick all wire and conduit scrap mainly in that box on that cart and stow it away... We kind of have a policy that makes it look like you weren't there."

-- Electrician

3. Set aside 15 minutes of paid time at the end of each day for clean up.

4. Motivate employees.

One company motivates their employees and raises safety awareness by explaining injury costs. Injuries can increase the overhead for a company and affect their ability to win competitive bids.

5. Use hangers and hooks to keep extension cords and hoses off the floor.

6. Develop a written housekeeping policy.



7. Assign dedicated staff to keep the site clean.

8. Provide positive feedback and recognition for good housekeeping practices.
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Poor housekeeping can result in serious injuries

\$337

A journeyman electrician tripped on some garbage at the jobsite. When he fell, he sliced the palm of his right hand on some debris.



\$7,365

An electrician twisted his right knee after stepping on a piece of plywood that slipped. Surgery was required to repair the meniscus in his knee. He was off work for 21 days.

Note: Dollar amounts represent workers' compensation costs paid by L&I – medical bills and/or partial wages.

\$167



An apprentice was walking backwards while pulling wire – he stepped onto a 2x4 containing a 16 penny nail. He had to pry the board and nail out of his foot.

Managers talk about a changing safety culture

“Frankly, it’s probably been the last seven years where it’s become something that companies are addressing, and I guess I don’t know, it’s just an evolution of the industry. But the industry is evolving to where there’s a genuine concern for safety and people are investing in it.”

“... the trend of our whole industry is the more you can bring people into thinking and planning whatever they're doing, the more safety sits right there. It just makes common sense, perfect sense, that you want to be around tomorrow and the next day and the next day, and you want to enjoy everything you do when you're not working.”

Copies of all *Common Ground* editions as well as the publication, *Electrical Contractors Industry Focus Group Report* can be found on SHARP's web site:

<https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/completed-projects/healthy-workplaces-electrical-millwork-food#overview>.

All quotes, opinions and company practices were solicited through focus groups and interviews conducted by L&I's Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program. This publication seeks to promote practical safety strategies; it does not attempt to interpret whether the opinions expressed meet the Washington State Administrative Code.



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