

Set up the space

Fixing the environment to move safer

Clear the space. Cut the risk.

The risk

When workspaces are cluttered, tight, or poorly set up, kaimahi (workers) are more likely to trip, twist, overreach or strain themselves. This is especially likely when they're trying to 'make it work' rather than stop and reset the space.

Why this matters

Many injuries linked to slips, trips and strains are not caused by careless people but by environments that make safe movement difficult.

Your role as a leader

As a leader, your role is to make mahi (work) safe for kaimahi (workers). If you focus on fixing the environment instead of questioning individual choices, kaimahi (workers) feel supported to stop, speak up and work safely.

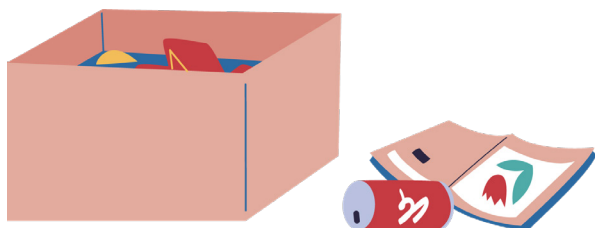
What this looks like in practice:

- Reassure kaimahi (workers) that it is safe and acceptable to pause and reset when the space isn't right.
- Remove any pressure to work around hazards.
- Act quickly on environmental issues raised by kaimahi (workers).
- Reinforce that setting up the space is part of the job, not a delay.

Barrier busting

Here are some common barriers that stop kaimahi (workers) from fixing the environment and what you as a leader can remove:

- **Perceived time pressure:** make it explicit that taking time to set up the space is expected as part of the job and not optional.
- **Layout or storage issues:** escalate or fix repeat clutter, poor storage or tight access points rather than relying on workarounds.
- **'Just get it done' culture:** reinforce that stopping a task due to space or layout is a good decision and not making a fuss.
- **Lack of equipment:** ensure items like storage solutions, cable covers and essential equipment are available and easy to access.



Ask the team

Use these questions to open up a **kōrero** (conversation) about what your team is really experiencing:

1. Where do you find yourself having to step over, reach around, or twist to get the job done?
2. If you stop because the space isn't safe, what makes that easy or hard to do?

Commitment

Complete this commitment with your team or with individuals eg, **'This week, during each pause and plan, I/we will aim to spot and focus on at least one environmental issue'**.

This week I/we will...

Continue the **kōrero** (conversation):

Follow up regularly to focus on setting up the space by asking curious questions such as **'Did anything get in the way of setting up the space properly today?'**.



Other resources

- **Set up the space** quick reference guide
- **Set up the space** micro card
- **Move Well: Skills for kaimahi** elearning
 - Moving techniques
 - Using equipment
 - Te Whare Tapa Whā
- **Move Well: Focus on leaders** elearning
 - Your role
 - Vision and support
 - Applying the learning - coaching guide