

**Lean is a way of thinking that aims to improve productivity and reduce waste from the way we work. An exercise that's ideal for helping organise the workplace is called the Five S exercise. It was originally developed by Toyota based on five Japanese words starting with 's'. It's ideal for the building site and doing it regularly can help you stay productive and safe. You'll probably also find new or better ways of doing things!**

The Five S's are:

**SORT (Seiri)** Take away what's is not needed or used often. Why have it around if you never need it?

**SET IN ORDER (Seiton)** Organise what's needed by identifying what you use most often, then neatly arranging things based on that. For example, you could have lockable drawers with the most used tools on the top shelves.

**SHINE (Seiso)** Clean the area with a clean up campaign. Get rid of that sawdust several times a day (it's not good for you anyway).

**STANDARDISE (Seiketsu)** Schedule regular cleaning and maintenance using the SORT, SET-IN

ORDER and SHINE steps. Clean up at the end of the day and remove the rubbish that builds up around site. Make time to clean and sharpen your tools.

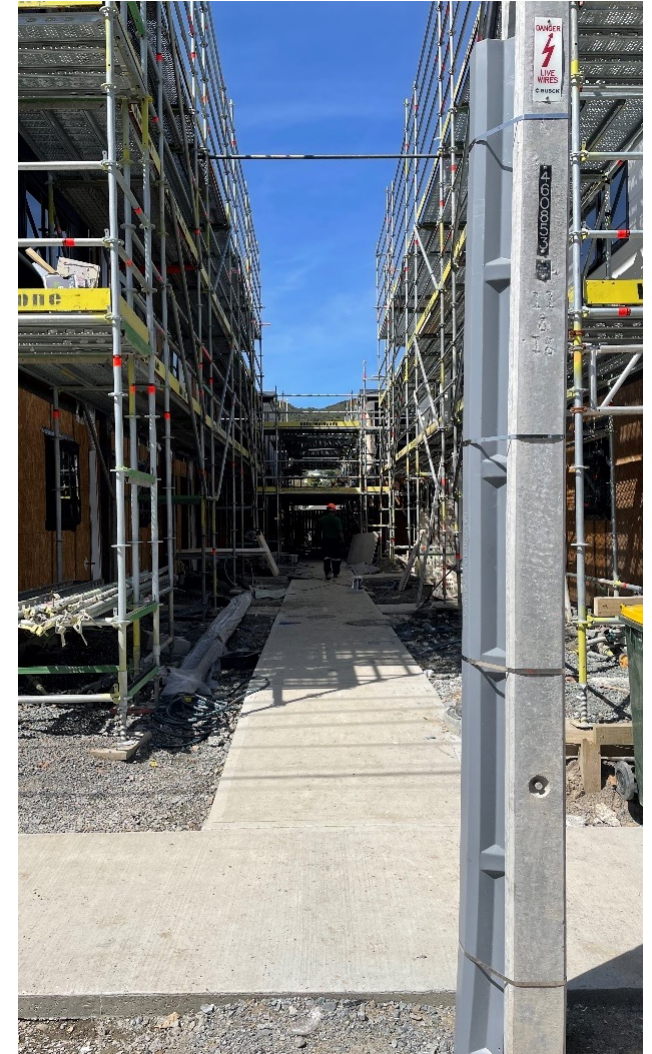
**SUSTAIN (Shitsuke)** Make Five S a way of life by forming a habit of following the first four s's on a regular basis. Drum the Five S's into your workers, in particular your apprentices. This is a habit for life that will pay back many times over!

### HOW TO DO IT:

The Five S's can be completed over a series of Toolbox Talks, for example talk one can be about sorting, another about setting in order and so on. Or you could do it all in one session, maybe with a BBQ after.

The time you'll need to take will depend on the size of your site or what area you want to focus on. It's an ideal activity for the whole team.

The key is to make this something that you do on a regular basis to get the full value and prevent injury. Site leaders are essential for making these habits stick – what they walk past they condone! They need to lead by example, which means getting their hands dirty on jobs that may seem “below them”.



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Here are some things to consider for each step.

**SORT:**

- Do you have items (tools , equipment, materials) onsite that you don't need?
- Are there items obscuring access ways or work areas?
- Can you collate and group things together for ease of use?
- Are you getting materials delivered way before they're needed, that sit there and clutter up the space?
- How are the traffic flows in and out of the site? Is there a good flow for equipment and materials to get to where the work is being done without people tripping over things or having to lift objects over other objects?

**SET IN ORDER:**

- Is there a place for everything?
- Are you storing things mostly up off the ground or below shoulder height?

- What's the best way of storing tools so they're convenient to the work?
- Is there a standard set of basic tools for each worker?
- How are you managing power leads and transformers? Does it look like spaghetti? Do you have power dedicated to the work or is the power always being argued over because workers are sharing the same leads and transformers?
- Do you have a dedicated battery recharging station?
- Do you need a dedicated cutting station?
- How are you managing rubbish waste?
- How are you managing water?
- How are your toilets and amenities?

**SHINE:**

- Is there cleaning equipment available?
- Have you planned to have enough waste bins delivered?
- Is there time built in to the schedule for cleaning and organising the site?

- What are workers expected to do to keep the site in a good state?
- Are leaders leading by example?
- Wet areas and dust should be a specific focus.

**STANDARDIZE:**

- Include the Five S's in any training manuals, site-specific safety plans or site inspections.
- Regularly review how it's working at tailgate meetings. Think about: How can our methods be improved? What's working? What's not working and what parts should we stop doing or change?
- Think about measuring the improvement in terms of how people are feeling about their day – are they less frustrated, less sore or getting more done?

**SUSTAIN:**

- Get into a daily or weekly rhythm where everyone on site regularly does Five S tasks.
- Site leaders and business owners should teach this as a basic skill to all their workforce – Think: this is just the way we work here!

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