

Broken Glass Cleanup: Protect the Next Person Too

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | Reviewed October 9, 2026 | Discussion + field checks

Why this matters

The main pane may be down while fragments remain in channels, footwear or waste. Cleanup is unfinished if the next worker can contact hidden glass or an unsecured opening.

Objective: Verify safe approach, collection and waste handoff before reopening the area.

Key hazards or failure points

Falling retained glass; cuts and punctures; fragments beyond the visible pile; unsuitable containers; contaminated waste; an unprotected opening.

Practical controls

- Isolate the fragment area and both sides of an affected opening. Have the glazing lead assess remaining glass and support before approach. Cleanup workers must not pull loose pieces from an unstable pane.
- Use suitable collection tools instead of hands to gather fragments. Select properly fitting cut, eye, face and body protection for the task. Do not compact shards by hand or treat gloves as puncture-proof.
- Prepare a suitable identified container and approved disposal route before collection. Keep sharp waste separated; do not rely on an ordinary thin bag to contain edges. Resolve possible chemical or biological contamination through the appropriate procedure.

Verify It in the Field

From a protected position, the lead checks remaining glass, barriers and access against the removal plan. Record the location, acceptance source, actual finding, checker and time. Uncertain support means HOLD.

The assigned worker checks tools, protection and container condition against the task procedure and equipment instructions. Confirm the container can contain the actual fragments and be moved safely without protruding glass.

Inspect the released work area, surrounding surfaces and collection route visually from safe positions; never feel for shards. The lead confirms temporary opening protection and waste handoff, records the result and authorizes reopening only after required checks pass.

Stop and reassess

Stop for unstable remaining glass, unexpected movement, damaged containment, unidentified contamination or incomplete opening protection. Keep people clear and obtain the required assessment. Report any injury and use the site first-aid response; do not continue through a bleeding injury.

Ask the crew

1. What remaining glass could fall during cleanup?
2. How will fragments reach disposal without hand contact?
3. Who confirms the area is ready to reopen?

Use the task plan and required specialist decisions before exposure.

Sources: OSHA 1926.25; 1926.95; task removal and waste procedures.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/broken-glass-cleanup-disposal