

SAFETY TALK

Housekeeping Is Safekeeping at Work

Housekeeping at work is as important as it is at home, especially if you want a safe workplace. People who must function every day in a messy, disorderly work environment have lower morale, although they may not be aware of the cause. But the safety ramifications of poor housekeeping in the workplace are even more important.

Poor housekeeping may result in employee injuries or even death, citations by OSHA (or another regulatory agency), and even difficulty in securing future work. How can such a seemingly “minor” issue such as housekeeping have such serious consequences?

Poor housekeeping practices can result in:

- Injuries when employees trip, fall, strike, or are struck by out-of-place objects
- Injuries from using improper tools because the correct tool can't be found
- Lowered production because of the time spent maneuvering over and around someone else's mess, and time spent looking for proper tools and materials
- Lack of future work due to a reputation for poor quality

General housekeeping rules to remember:

- Housekeeping is everyone's responsibility!
- Clean up after yourself. Pick up trash and debris and dispose of it properly. Keep your work area clean throughout the day, minimizing the time needed to clean a “larger mess” at the end of the day.
- Dispose of combustibles and flammables properly. If improperly discarded, they will increase the potential for a fire.
- Remove protruding nails and other sharp objects, or hammer them flat to prevent someone from stepping on them.
- Stack materials and supplies in an orderly manner and secure them so they won't topple.
- Report all slips, trips, and falls, with or without injury, so the hazard can be corrected.

Do you value your health and safety, your work reputation, as well as your future employment? If you do, practice these general housekeeping rules. A well-kept workplace shows respect for those who work there. Help keep it that way!

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Here are some results of poor housekeeping practices at work:

- Time spent investigating and reporting accidents that could have been avoided.
- Fires due to improper storage and disposal of flammable or combustible materials and wastes.
- Substandard quality of finished products because of production schedule delays, damaged or defective finishes, ill-equipped employees, etc.
- “Wall-to-wall” OSHA inspections due to the “first impression” of the compliance officer.

Policies to consider:

- Institute a routine cleaning schedule.
- Hold everyone in the workplace accountable for housekeeping.
- Keep walkways free of debris and storage items.
- Train all employees on the proper disposal of combustible and flammable materials.
- Provide non-skid strips or floor mats in slippery or wet areas.
- Ensure that workers wear proper footwear for their work environment.
- Encourage employees to inform you immediately of any potential safety hazards and accidents, with or without injuries. Implement corrective measures immediately.

TOPIC: Housekeeping Is Safekeeping at Work

Company Name _____

Job Name _____

Safety Recommendations _____

Attended By:
