

## “Housekeeping Is Safe-Keeping At Work”

“You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.” Never has this phrase been so true as when it comes to housekeeping at work. The negative impressions and implications of poor housekeeping can affect you and co-workers for a long time to come. Morale is lowered for most people who must function every day in a messy, disorderly work environment, although they may not be aware of the cause.

Here are some results of poor housekeeping practices:

- 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 for looking for proper tools and materials;
- 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;



Here are some reasons why to keep your work area clean:

- You reduce trip and fall hazards.
- Increased production. You won't have to waste time looking for a misplaced tool. You will always know where your tools are when you put them where they belong after you use them.
- If someone falls because of materials you left on the floor, you will feel guilty because you were a causal factor in the accident. Also, the injured worker may want to remind you of that!
- You reduce a potential fire hazard by removing unneeded combustibles from the work area.

General housekeeping rules to remember are:

- Clean up after yourself. Pick up your trash and debris and dispose of it properly, or place it where it will not pose a hazard to others. Institute a routine cleaning schedule.
- Keep your work area clean throughout the day. This will minimize the amount of 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 or snagging themselves.
- Stack materials and supplies orderly and secure them so they won't topple.

Housekeeping should be an integral part of every organization's safety program. Good housekeeping reduces the potential for mishaps, injuries and accidents, improves morale, increases production, and makes operations more efficient.

In order to ensure that proper housekeeping is maintained, a continuous process involving both workers and custodial personnel, if available, is required. Good housekeeping is most easily achieved if it is accomplished throughout the day as needed. At the end of the shift, all areas should be thoroughly cleaned in preparation for the next day or the following shift.

Each employee needs to understand that housekeeping is an integral part of his/her job and not merely a supplement to work already performed. All employees share the responsibility for keeping their work station and work areas free from the accumulation of materials. As good housekeeping becomes a standard part of operations, less time and effort are needed to maintain an appropriate or desired level of workplace cleanliness.