



Safety Talk



August 2020

Housekeeping

Why should we pay attention to housekeeping at work?

Effective housekeeping can help control or eliminate workplace hazards. Poor housekeeping practices frequently contribute to incidents.

Housekeeping is not just cleanliness. It includes keeping work areas neat and orderly, maintaining halls and floors free of slip and trip hazards, and removing of waste materials (e.g., paper, cardboard) and other fire hazards from work areas. It also requires paying attention to important details such as the layout of the whole workplace, aisle marking, the adequacy of storage facilities, and maintenance. Good housekeeping is also a basic part of incident and fire prevention.

Effective housekeeping is an ongoing operation: it is not a one-time or hit-and-miss cleanup done occasionally. Periodic "panic" cleanups are costly and ineffective in reducing incidents.

What are some benefits of good housekeeping practices?

Effective housekeeping results in:

- reduced handling to ease the flow of materials
- fewer tripping and slipping incidents in clutter-free and spill-free work areas
- decreased fire hazards
- lower worker exposures to hazardous products (e.g. dusts, vapours)
- better control of tools and materials, including inventory and supplies
- more efficient equipment cleanup and maintenance
- better hygienic conditions leading to improved health
- more effective use of space
- reduced property damage by improving preventive maintenance
- less janitorial work
- improved morale
- improved productivity (tools and materials will be easier to find)



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