



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

Volume 3 – Issue 35

August 28th, 2016

Housekeeping

In the workplace, 'good housekeeping' is the term used for keeping the worksite clean, neat, and free of hazards that can cause injury. This isn't just a matter of appearances – it's a serious safety issue. In fact, we can easily earn OSHA's "seal of disapproval" – a citation for safety standard violations – for failure to practice good housekeeping. There are, of course, other advantages to good housekeeping. A neat, clean workplace makes it easier to find things, which saves time and increases productivity. It's a more pleasant place to work, which improves morale. But remember, the real reason for good housekeeping is safety.

Housekeeping is a safety concern that is often overlooked or taken for granted. But far too many accidents happen because people didn't keep their work areas neat and clean. Poor housekeeping also increases the dangers when evacuating the workplace in an emergency. Housekeeping isn't something to be swept under the rug. It is a legitimate and important safety issue.

In one recent year, OSHA issued more than 1,100 citations for violations of Subpart D ("Walking and Working Surfaces"), which includes the housekeeping rules. Penalties for these violations totaled more than \$550,000. Enforcing good housekeeping practices helps encourage employees to maintain alertness to hazards and a good "safety attitude."

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 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;
- Substandard quality of finished products because of production schedule delays, damaged or defective finishes, ill-equipped employees, etc.;
- Lack of future work due to a reputation for poor quality; and
- "Wall-to-wall" OSHA inspections due to the poor "first impression" of the compliance officer.

General housekeeping rules to remember are:

- Plan your work.
- 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.



Weekly Safety Meeting

- Dispose of combustibles and flammables properly. If improperly discarded, they will increase the potential for a fire.
- Clean up all oil spills as soon as possible to minimize spreading.
- Stack materials and supplies in an orderly manner and secure them so they won't topple.
- Do you value your health and safety, your work reputation, as well as your future employment? If you do, practice these general housekeeping rules.

Good housekeeping is everyone's responsibility. Don't assume that someone else is going to clean up a mess or take the proper precautions. Make it your business to remove hazards from the workplace. Fortunately, practicing good housekeeping is really very easy, once you've made it a habit. It only takes a few seconds to put things away properly or to clean up and discard potentially hazardous materials. These few seconds are well worth it if they can prevent a serious injury. And, you'll discover you work faster and better in a clean workplace.

Keeping your work area clean helps keep hazards from being unseen!!



