

Housekeeping

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 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (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 over, 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.

Remember: If you are complacent about safe housekeeping, employees may become desensitized to poor practices and become unable to identify hazards, putting them at risk of injury.

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 being injured by 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.
- Remove any cords or cables in walking areas.
- Organize cables under desks.

Do you value your health and safety and 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!

