

Effective Office Housekeeping

Why should we pay attention to housekeeping at work? How do your offices, restrooms, break rooms, supply rooms, and other work areas look? Are they clean, sanitary, and hazard free?

Effective housekeeping can eliminate some workplace hazards and help get a job done safely and properly. Poor housekeeping can frequently contribute to accidents by hiding hazards that cause injuries. If the sight of paper, debris, clutter and spills is accepted as normal, then other more serious health and safety hazards may be taken for granted.

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. Good housekeeping is a basic part of accident and fire prevention.

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

Poor housekeeping can be a cause of accidents, such as:

- Tripping over loose objects on floors, stairs and platforms;
- Being hit by falling objects;
- Slipping on greasy, wet or dirty surfaces;
- Striking against projecting, poorly stacked items or misplaced materials, and cutting, puncturing, or tearing the skin.

Here are a few effective office housekeeping practices:

Flooring

- ✓ Keep all walkway surfaces dry; clean, sanitary, and orderly;
- ✓ Provide warning signs for wet floor areas;
- ✓ Use mats at entryways on wet days;
- ✓ Clean up spills immediately;
- ✓ Block off and repair any damaged flooring;
- ✓ Re-lay or stretch carpets that bulge or have become bunched.

Entryways, Exits, and Stairs

- ✓ Always keep clean, dry, and free of debris;
- ✓ Keep clear of all obstructions;
- ✓ Make sure that door mats lay flat at all times;
- ✓ Never store materials on stairs or in stairways or stairwells.

When we share the responsibility for safety in the workplace, everyone wins!!

Electrical Cords

- ✓ Inspected electrical cords routinely and keep in good condition;
- ✓ Damaged cords and plugs should be replaced immediately;
- ✓ Equipment that requires grounding must be of the three-wire grounded-connection type;
- ✓ Extension cords should not be used to replace permanent wiring;
- ✓ Never overload electrical wall sockets, power-strips, or extension cords;
- ✓ Cords should be kept out of aisles and other walking areas.

Supplies

- ✓ Stack cartons and materials on a firm foundation, and not so high that the stack is unstable and could topple over;
- ✓ Store heavier materials on lower shelves and lighter supplies on top shelves;
- ✓ Use a ladder or stepstool to reach supplies on upper shelves safely;
- ✓ Store supplies to allow a clear space of 20 inches or more around fire sprinkler heads;
- ✓ Do not allow stored materials to obstruct aisles, stairs, emergency exits, or fire alarms and extinguishers.

Desks

- ✓ Never leave a desk drawer open;
- ✓ Avoid piling up high stacks of paper and files on desks, file cabinets, or floor;
- ✓ Never lay paper or files on electrical equipment;
- ✓ Store bags and purses so the straps do not become a tripping hazard;
- ✓ Store boxes so they will not stick out and become a tripping hazard.



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