Good Housekeeping is the Order of the Day



- A production worker slips on an oily patch, falls and breaks his hip.
- An office employee reaches up to an overhead shelf and accidentally pulls down a heavy stack of binders onto her head, resulting in a neck injury.
- A kitchen worker reaches into a drawer and receives a severe cut from a knife which was stored in the wrong place.
- An accumulation of packing material provides the fuel which turns a minor fire into one which destroys a complete workshop.

These accidents all have one factor in common – they involve poor job site housekeeping. Good housekeeping means keeping your work area free of dirt and clutter, keeping everything in its place and making sure there are no hazards.

Certain responsibilities come with your job. You are expected to complete certain tasks in a specific way. You are also expected to practice good housekeeping by ensuring your work area is safe and in good repair.

Probably nobody knows your work area better than you do. You are the only one who knows how to coax along that piece of machinery which you operate. And you know about the section of the floor that always gets slippery when it rains outside.

That’s why you may also be the most qualified person to keep your work area safe. On-the-job housekeeping is an important part of everyone’s job.

Poor housekeeping is said to be responsible for more than one third of job site accidents. Falls, hand injuries and fires are just some of the unfortunate incidents which can result from sloppy workplaces.

You may not be authorized or qualified to do the actual repairs or cleaning up of hazards, but you can do your part by being alert to problems and reporting them.

One aspect of good housekeeping is to make sure that the area remains free of clutter. Materials and scrap scattered around can present tripping hazards and can provide fuel for a fire. Clutter can obscure safety signs and obstruct emergency exits and fire extinguishers.

Discard trash properly. Oily rags should be disposed of in approved covered metal containers which are emptied regularly. Hazardous materials—even everyday aerosol cans and batteries—should be properly disposed of and never just tossed into the trash. Hazardous liquids should NEVER be dumped down the drain into the sewer system.

How about slipping and tripping hazards? Make sure floor surfaces are clean and free of slippery substances such as oil or mud. Don’t allow cords, cables or hoses to

trail across traffic areas. Likewise, do not permit stored materials or trash to accumulate on traffic routes. Keep drawers and cupboard doors closed, and put unused chairs out of the way.

Promptly clean up any spills. If a spill cannot be cleaned up right away, barricade the area so that someone else does not slip on it. Repair leaks as soon as possible.

Remove from your work area any accumulated tools or materials you do not use. Return them to storage areas or tool cribs, or send them to the trash or recycling areas.

Store materials in a way to prevent them from falling on people. Heavy items should be stored in lower areas—not overhead. Materials must not protrude into aisleways where they can become obstructions.

Clean up as you go along. Put tools back in their assigned places as soon as you are finished with them. If clutter isn’t allowed to accumulate, you’ll never have a big job to do cleaning it up.