

Housekeeping

Housekeeping, whether we realize it or not, is a part of virtually everyone's daily life. The lack of housekeeping can contribute to many hazards and accidents in the workplace and at home. For example:

- Your child leaves a toy on the stairs, which could cause a slip, trip or fall.
- A 60 year old man with 30 years of experience, slipped off a scaffold (covered with ice and snow) and fell 20ft to his death.

Slips/Trips/Falls

Keep floors clean and clear. Clean up oil, grease, water and other liquids which can cause slips, trips and falls. Anti-slip flooring and mats are a good idea in high traffic areas.

Storage Areas/Walkways

Storage and service areas should be maintained in a clean and orderly manner and free of debris. Keep all walkways, aisles, stairs and platforms clear of obstructions. Oxygen and acetylene hoses, welding leads, cables, water hoses, air lines and electrical extension cords should not run in aisles, stairways or other passageways. They should be routed by means that don't present any hazards.

Do not pile materials in any area where people must walk. Materials which are stacked or piled near walkways should not project into aisles, stairs or platforms and should be properly stacked so they will not topple or fall.

Work Areas

Keep your work area clean and clear. Pick up and dispose of debris as it accumulates. It requires more time to clean areas that are plagued with housekeeping issues. Return hand tools and equipment to their proper storage places when finished with them. Materials (pieces of pipe, conduit, etc., and all debris) should be stored in an orderly manner while work is in process. Remove all loose objects after completing overhead work. Replace all covers, guards or access panels. Oily, greasy rags should be deposited in a designated, closed metal container to prevent spontaneous combustion.

Obstructing Access

Do not obstruct access to emergency exits, fixed ladders, stairways, electrical switches, shutoff valves, fire fighting (including sprinkler heads) or rescue equipment and safety eyewash

fountains or safety showers. Store any material away from switch boxes or other electrical equipment.

Office Buildings

All doors and walkways should be kept free of debris, shrubs or any other obstructions. Keep doors and windows in good working order. During an emergency, it is essential to expedite the evacuation with easy access through working doors and windows. Stairs should be equipped with adequate hand rails and treads. Provide sufficient lighting inside and outside. An employee should be able to navigate around after dark.

Housekeeping should be everyone's responsibility. Floors that are maintained in poor condition are one of the leading causes of accidents. A good housekeeping inspection program can serve as a useful tool to monitor cleanliness and hazards that are prone to promote accidents. The use of a periodic inspection checklist can prevent complacency and lead to a safety work environment.

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References

www.osha.gov

www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/house.html