

# Safety Bugle

## Today's Topic: Housekeeping



### Fundamentals of Housekeeping

An uncluttered workplace is fundamental to any facility's safety program. In addition to cleanliness, industrial housekeeping must include other factors, such as orderliness and proper arrangement of materials. It is important to know the benefits of good industrial housekeeping. Let's review the importance and meaning of order in achieving good housekeeping, and discuss some guides for checking your own work area.

### Why good housekeeping?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) General Duty Clause establishes that employers are required to maintain a work environment that is both safe and healthful. Housekeeping is an integral part of this requirement. Sloppy working conditions can also lead to a lack of pride in your work.

In addition to encouraging poor attitudes, **bad industrial housekeeping can lead to:**

- Slips from slick or wet floors, platforms, and other walking and working surfaces.
- Trips from objects or materials that are left in walkways and work areas. Falls from holes in walking and working surfaces, uneven flooring, uncovered pits or drains.
- Collisions caused by poorly stored materials, overhanging or protruding objects, haphazard spotting of pallets, and use of aisles for storing materials and equipment.

Poor industrial housekeeping creates hazards for all employees in the immediate area.

### Good industrial housekeeping

- Helps eliminate accident and fire causes.
- Saves energy by eliminating the need to work "around" congested areas.
- Provides the best use of space.
- Keeps inventory of materials to a minimum.
- Helps control property damage.
- Guarantees a good workplace appearance.
- Encourages better working habits.
- Reflects an image of a well-run operation.
- Reduces the amount of cleanup and janitorial work.

### Order

Housekeeping is more than just sweeping the floor and wiping dust off equipment. Cleanliness is only a part of housekeeping. The most critical and most overlooked part of housekeeping is ORDER. A work area is in order when there are no unnecessary objects in the area and when all necessary items are in their proper places.

### Housekeeping rules

Walking and working surfaces should be clean, dry and unobstructed.



- Aisleways and exits should be clearly marked and unobstructed.
- Approved trash receptacles should be provided to assure proper waste disposal.
- Splash guards and oil pans should be available for machinery as needed.
- Work area floors should be kept free of pallets, parts, equipment, unsecured extension cords and hoses.
- Floors, platforms and stairways should be kept in good repair.
- Materials should be stacked in a stable manner; limit height as necessary to maintain stability.
- Storage areas in and around buildings should be free of refuse and debris.
- Stock should be stored in a manner that will not obstruct sprinklers (18-inch clearance for ordinary combustibles, 36-inch clearance for flammable liquids).
- Combustible materials should never be stored around radiators, steam coils, ovens or other heat sources; in transformer vaults; or around electrical switch gear.
- Storage areas should be placed in a convenient location to encourage their use.
- Adequate lighting, both natural and artificial, should be provided to assure good visibility for work activities and to reveal dirt, obstructions and poor housekeeping conditions.
- Racks, shelves and lockers should be maintained for tools, personal protective equipment and personal items.
- Lunch facilities, locker rooms and toilet areas should be clean, orderly and sanitary.