

## Housekeeping 101

Ensuring a safe and efficient workplace involves much more than just adhering to regulatory mandates; it's about establishing routines to protect people from injury and protect property from fire.

### Good Housekeeping

Poor housekeeping is a leading and preventable cause of accidents such as slips, trips, falls, cuts, struck-by's, and workplace fires.

- ✓ Keep walkways, ramps, stairways, and areas around ladders clear of tools, trash, debris, materials, and equipment.
- ✓ Place used oily or flammable rags in fire-resistant containers with self-closing lids.
- ✓ Designate daily cleanup times for each area of the workplace. This helps maintain consistent cleanliness and reduces fire and slip/trip hazards.
- ✓ Schedule monthly or quarterly inventory checks to identify unnecessary items that are occupying valuable space, especially if they are flammable, hazardous, or combustible.



- ✓ After identifying surplus or outdated items, create a plan to remove them from the premises. This may include donating, recycling, or discarding according to applicable regulations.

### Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are a necessity for most Districts. Make sure they are not creating a hazard by:

- Ensuring hazardous materials remain stored in their designated areas when not in use. Storage should be away from high-traffic activities, near stairs, emergency exit routes, and far from incompatible substances (refer to SDS).
- Chemical products should be in appropriate containers with secure lids and labeling. Regularly check containers for leaks, rust, bloating, crystal formation, or other signs of deterioration.

Accumulating expired or unused hazardous materials can lead to potential risks if not properly managed. If you observe unsafe conditions or hazards related to storage or container integrity report it to your supervisor.

### More Best Practices

- Since back injuries are prevalent for Districts, make sure material handling aids like hand trucks and carts are readily available in their designated storage area.
- Ensure spill kits are stocked and readily accessible to trained employees.
- Place frequently used tools and materials in easily accessible areas.
- Implement a “return and replace” mindset so that items do not accumulate and create clutter.
- Check to make sure flammable gas cylinders are separated from oxygen cylinders by at least 20 feet or by a non-combustible barrier at least 5 feet high with a half-hour fire resistance rating.
- Ensure materials in storage are stacked neatly and not too high to prevent tipping.

### Conclusion

Housekeeping is an ongoing commitment, not a one-time task. It is maintained not achieved. By using these best practices, you contribute to a safer environment for everyone.

This *Safety Talk* provides awareness level training housekeeping in the workplace.

If this information is unclear or if you have any additional questions, please talk to your supervisor.