



## Organizational and Safety Solutions

### *Developing a Housekeeping Program*

#### Background

Housekeeping is basic safety issue that refers to routine maintenance and up-keep of a workplace. Good housekeeping practices are a critical safety aspect that needs to be an integral part of every company's safety and health program. Good housekeeping practices reduce potential accidents and injuries, reduce fire potential, improve morale and possibly make an operation more efficient.

OSHA addresses housekeeping in the "General requirements for Housekeeping" (1910.22). Items contained in the standard include areas where housekeeping is critical to providing a safe workplace, keeping aisles free of debris for life safety evacuations and proper housekeeping as a method of fire control.

#### Proper Housekeeping Guidelines

Good housekeeping guidelines would include the following elements:

- Floors are swept or vacuumed on regular basis to prevent accumulation of combustible materials
- Excess packing materials or scrap are disposed of properly.
- Liquid spills on tile and other hard surface floors are cleaned up quickly to prevent slip falls
- Floors with the potential for grease accumulation are treated with effective cleaning agents.
- Keep a sufficient number of waste baskets and trash receptacles in each work area. A trash container should be equipped with self-closing lids.
- Stairways, ladders and platforms should be kept free from obstruction.
- Materials should be properly stored (including flammable liquids cabinets if necessary)
- Paths of travel and aisle ways should be well marked and free from low profile obstructions.
- Storage shelving should be secured, stable and well organized.
- Workstations should be organized and are uncluttered.
- Combustible dusts should be handled in accordance with OSHA's Combustible Dust Standard.

## Developing a Housekeeping Program

Housekeeping needs to be incorporated into all processes, operations and daily job tasks performed in the workplace. Every worker needs to understand that good housekeeping is a part of his / her responsibilities. Supervisors need to be held accountable for good housekeeping in their work areas.

Self-Inspection audits are a good method of evaluating and controlling the physical hazards that are created by poor housekeeping. A checklist should be established in evaluating key areas where housekeeping issues are a concern. Performing regular audits sends a message to employees that housekeeping is a key component of the Safety and Health program.

## Key Areas to Concentrate on Proper Housekeeping

Specific areas need to have a high priority of proper housekeeping due to their safety related importance. These areas include the following:

- High Traffic Areas - Paths of travel in the event of an emergency evacuation. Keep these areas free from raw materials and scrap.
- Work Areas – Proper housekeeping and organization reduces crowding and clutter, improves efficiency and work flow.
- Storage Areas – These areas should be designed to properly accommodate the types of raw material and finished product safely and within the shelving/racking outside edges. Storage of products and goods on the floor and walkways should be prohibited
- Stairs, Platforms and Ladders – Base of stairs and landing should be kept clear and never used as storage areas. Stair treads should be well maintained properly cleaned and slip resistant.
- Mechanical Rooms – These areas need to be kept clean and clear at all times for accessibility in the event of emergency. Storage to the front of electrical panels should be maintained at a distance of 36 inches at all times.
- Flammable Liquids Rooms and Cabinetry – Due to the importance of housekeeping and preventing serious fire damage, the flammable liquids room needs to be properly maintained and cleaned. Any and all spills need to be properly cleaned and removed. Excess product and leaking valves and fittings should be immediately fixed or replaced.
- Loading Docks - Adequate clearance needs to be maintained for safe usage of mechanical equipment. Edges to platforms should be kept clear of low profile storage and walking surfaces kept free from water and other liquids.
- Process Equipment – Machinery frequently has excess grease and lubricants that are leaking or draining onto floor areas/drains. Drains need to be kept clear of debris and excess liquids removed frequently.
- Food Preparation and Dishwashing Areas. – These areas usually have tiled floor covering which becomes very slippery from airborne cooking grease, small food items and water spills. Proper and frequent floor cleaning procedures are necessary to prevent injuries.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your local PMA Risk Control Consultant.

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