Huntsville Center Safety Gram
Engineering the Edge for Safety Excellence
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Clutter Causes Casualties

What does housekeeping have to do with safety? Lots! A clean and orderly workplace is essential to avoid falls, fires and many other kinds of accidents and injuries.

Clutter and disorder contribute to many workplace accidents. To help prevent them, use this checklist to find and eliminate the hazards of poor workplace housekeeping:

- Floors are free of water, mud, ice, grease, trash and waste materials.
- Traffic routes remain clear. They are free of tripping hazards such as electrical cables, hoses and stored materials.
- Exits and stairways are well marked. They are kept clear at all times and are not used for storage.
- Fire extinguishers are kept charged according to a regular schedule. They are located where they will be easily accessible in case of a fire. They are not obstructed by stored materials.
- Trash cans are located where they are needed, and are emptied regularly.
- Oily rags are disposed of in covered metal cans.
- Lighting is adequate for safety. Burned-out lights are replaced promptly.
- Supplies and materials are stored safely. They are stacked so they cannot fall.
- Any potentially hazardous materials are safely stored in the correct kinds of containers. They are correctly labeled and accompanied by Material Safety Data Sheets. Storage arrangements take into account the requirements of temperature, ventilation and humidity for various materials. Potentially incompatible materials are separated.
- Flammable and combustible materials are stored away from sources of ignition.
- Machinery is kept clean, free of oil, grease and dust. Equipment is maintained properly to prevent fires and accidents.
- Tools are cleaned and put away right after they are used. There are designated places for tools.
- Work stations are left clean at the end of the shift.
- Surfaces and equipment are checked over regularly for hazards such as protruding nails and rough surfaces. These could cause accidents such as eye injuries, cuts and bruises.
- Stools and chairs are placed so they are not tripping hazards. They are kept in good repair. When chairs or stools are damaged, they are removed from service so they cannot be used accidentally.
- Drawers and cabinet doors are kept closed to prevent tripping accidents. Filing cabinets are filled from the bottom up to prevent them from tipping over.
- Any smoking is confined to certain designated areas. Ashtrays are available and are used.
- Lunch areas are kept clean and free of trash. Washrooms are also kept clean and dry.
- Everyone takes responsibility for jobsite housekeeping. All employees know how to report safety hazards so they will be corrected.

Remember, a safe workplace depends on each and every employee taking responsibility for good housekeeping—to prevent fires, falls and other accidents.

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