

Housekeeping

If you want to learn about a company's attitude toward safety, just take a look at their housekeeping habits, because good housekeeping is really one of the most important aspects of safety. Good housekeeping is not the sole responsibility of the maintenance and custodial staff; it must be practiced by everyone.

Everyone must work as a team and follow the rules to prevent accidents by maintaining good housekeeping standards. Here are some examples:

- Keep aisles, passage ways, stairways, and floors clear of tools, materials, boxes, cords, cables, air hoses, and trash
- Close drawers
- Cover sharp edges of tools
- Stack materials carefully, so they won't fall or block sprinkler access
- Clean up all spills immediately and properly—or call someone who can
- Report any loose or broken flooring or other broken equipment
- Avoid keeping food and beverages in the work area
- Place all trash in proper containers—closed metal containers for combustible waste
- Don't let paper or other combustibles come in contact with lights or electrical equipment
- Prevent dirt or grease buildup on machinery and equipment
- Smoke only where permitted, and put out smoking materials in ashtrays
- Keep flammable liquid containers closed when not in use
- Don't place tools or equipment on the edges of shelves or tables
- Make sure all containers are labeled; the labels should be legible, not blurred by liquids that have run down the outside of the containers
- Do not store supplies where they may be mistaken for something else. For example, it is not a good idea to store caustic chemicals with cleaning powders and liquids
- Be familiar with special chemicals, gases, and liquids that are used in your work area, and know the ones that can and cannot be stored together
- Dispose of hazardous substances —like flammable liquids—by the safe method prescribed. If you aren't sure how to dispose of a substance, check with your supervisor

In addition to all the safety benefits it contributes, good housekeeping results in a more pleasant working environment. Almost everyone prefers cleanliness and neatness to filth and clutter. Because good housekeeping is important to your safety as well as the safety of your co-workers, concentrate on keeping your work area clean. Make good housekeeping a daily routine.