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15-19

07 August 2015

Hazard Free Housekeeping for Your Work Area

It doesn't take much for a fire to start or for an accident to happen in an untidy workspace. A few oily rags jumbled together and dumped on the floor, or a few boxes stacked carelessly in an aisle are set-ups for disaster. Keeping your work area clean and tidy helps avoid jobsite accidents including falls, fires, cuts, and chemical exposures.

Follow these tips for safe jobsite housekeeping:

- ◆ Keep all materials and equipment in their proper storage places when they are not in use.
- ◆ Do not keep tools and equipment around if you do not need them. Return unnecessary tools to the tool crib and materials to central storage areas.
- ◆ Store tools safely to prevent injury. Blades should be covered. Do not leave tools where they could fall off a bench.
- ◆ Keep traffic areas such as aisles clear and free of stored materials and scrap.
- ◆ Make sure entryways and traffic lanes are dry and free of ice, water, and grease.
- ◆ Do not allow obstacles such as cables and hoses to cross traffic areas. These create unnecessary tripping hazards.
- ◆ Keep emergency equipment in good condition and free of obstacles. Do not allow anything to block access to emergency exits, fire extinguishers, fire hoses, fire sprinklers, safety showers, eyewashes, or first aid equipment.
- ◆ Maintain electrical equipment. Keep cords untangled and away from heat and moisture. Whenever possible, have permanent wiring installed instead of using extension cords.
- ◆ Close drawers and cabinet doors promptly. Many serious accidents have occurred when someone tripped over an open drawer or slammed into an open storage cupboard door.
- ◆ Clean up spills immediately. Know what to do in case of a chemical spill.
- ◆ Keep chemicals in properly labeled containers and keep them closed when not in use.
- ◆ Keep only the amount of chemical you require in your work area.
- ◆ Know where to find the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for any chemical you use.
- ◆ Make sure ventilation is adequate.
- ◆ Keep trash and scrap cleaned up and thrown away. Oily rags must be disposed of in approved covered containers.
- ◆ Empty trash and scrap containers frequently.
- ◆ Keep machinery free of accumulated dust, scrap, or oil.
- ◆ Repair or report any hazards such as loose tile or carpeting, loose stairs and holes in the floor.
- ◆ Keep windows and light fixtures clean to improve lighting. Replace burned out light fixtures promptly.
- ◆ Watch for surfaces with splinters and have them sanded down.
- ◆ Never store heavy objects out of sight in an overhead location.
- ◆ Confine your eating and drinking to the lunch area. Smoke only in designated areas.
- ◆ Keep walls and work surfaces free of excess paper. Have a system for posting and dealing with phone messages. Keep addresses and other notes in a simple filing system to keep them off your work surface.



Housekeeping is everyone's job and working together will not only ensure a clean workspace, it will also help to ensure a safe one. The old saying about "a place for everything and everything in its place" sums up jobsite housekeeping!

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