

Loss Control *NOTES*

Good Housekeeping Makes Sense

“A place for everything, and everything in its place.”

Adapted from Safety Sense, Vol. 6, No. 5

It’s a challenge, right? But the fact is, good housekeeping plays a key role in any effective safety program.

What’s in it for you?

When everything you use for your work is where it should be, you spend less time searching for it. You’ll be less frustrated and have more time to spend on your work-maintaining high quality productivity. Plus, your job is more enjoyable when your work area looks and feels neat. Read on for a few tips to improve housekeeping practices and reduce unsafe conditions throughout your facilities.

What’s in it for others?

Use designated storage areas. Flammables and other hazardous materials casually left in “temporary” storage areas are a disaster waiting to happen for employees, visitors, and students. Designated storage areas should be well maintained. Conduct periodic inventories and inspections. Remove clutter.

Set out adequate trash containers

Cafeterias, offices, and classrooms need adequate trash containers. Containers placed outside main entrances help to discourage littering. Empty on a routine basis.

Set a positive example

Good habits can develop as quickly as bad habits. If you promote safety and good housekeeping with a positive example, chances are you will influence a cleaner, safer place for employees to work and students to be educated.

Administrators can set good examples by checking their own office areas for tripping hazards. Start by ensuring cords are not strewn across aisles.

Spilled food and drinks should be wiped up ASAP. A custodian should be on duty near the cafeteria during lunch periods.

Make good housekeeping practices universal

Apply good housekeeping practices throughout all sites. Close file cabinet drawers in offices, pick up pencils and paper clips from hallway floors. Administrators and staff should get caught in the act of being neat.

Use a safety committee or safety coordinator

Your safety coordinator should be responsible for overall housekeeping. Add housekeeping practices to your inspection program. Good housekeeping is important in hallways, stairwells, offices, and classrooms. But it is vital in areas like shops, labs, and maintenance workrooms where one slip or trip could lead to serious accident.

Involve employees daily

Employee involvement is important to achieving success. Supervisors should stress to each maintenance

Continued on page 2

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Loss Control *NOTES*

Good Housekeeping Makes Sense, page 2

staff person the expectation that neatness counts.

Advise employees of proper reporting procedures for maintenance problems as well as accidents. Establish a formal plan. Use your district or municipal newsletter (with pictures) to acknowledge staff, employees, students, and teachers who get caught in the act of good housekeeping. Give small awards for neat offices, classrooms and work areas.

Bright Idea

What office or classroom does not have materials stored and stacked? It seems to be a fact of life. To avoid injuries from materials that tip and tumble, stack heavier items on the bottom. Remember to allow plenty of space at the top so that sprinkler heads can do their job.