Maintain a Clean Workplace Together



Safety Talk

Good housekeeping at work can do wonders to keep you safe from slips, trips, falls and fires. But good area maintenance habits don't just happen – they require teamwork and employees to get involved in developing standards that fit each location.

What's at Stake?

There are serious reasons for not trying to function in a messy work environment. Examples include:

- Injury or death resulting from a trip or fall
- Injury or death in a fire caused by improper storage or disposal of combustible materials
- Reduced productivity because of time spent getting around or over someone else's clutter and looking for proper tools and materials

What Can Go Wrong

A fire started in a garbage can in the welding shop of an offshore rig. The fire burned through a set of hoses above and ignited the acetylene inside. Fortunately, the acetylene tank regulator was shut off, and stopped the fire from building creating a lot of smoke. Afterwards, a policy was introduced to keep all trash cans out of the welding shop and behind a door, barrier or out of reach of grinder spray, cutting torches or welding machine slag. Containers for scrap metal were allowed in the welding shop but had to be labeled "Metal Items Only". Don't wait for a disaster to motivate you. With a little effort and teamwork, you and your coworkers can avoid an unsafe mess.

How to Protect Yourself

Workers should be involved in determining housekeeping standards to ensure that they are followed. Here are some recommended housekeeping practices to use for your workplace:

- Use checklists to measure how well housekeeping standards are being met.
- Vacuum or sweep dusty surfaces frequently.
- Keep aisles, exits and entrances free of obstructions.
- Keep work areas clean, free of clutter and arranged properly.
- Lighting sources should be clean and clear.
- Clean up spills and leaks of any type quickly and properly.
- Clean and store tools and equipment properly in designated storage areas only.
- Fix or report broken or damaged tools and equipment.

Final Word

A well-organized space can be a real morale booster. Do your part to clean up clutter and keep your workplace safe.