Workplace Housekeeping in General Industry – Quick Tips



Housekeeping is a broad term that refers to the routine maintenance and upkeep of a workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has found good workplace housekeeping reduces injuries and accidents, improves morale, reduces fire potential and can even make operations more efficient.

OSHA makes reference to housekeeping in several general industry standards:

- Walking-working surfaces 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.22(a) & (d)
- Flammable liquids 29 CFR 1910.106(e)(9) & (h)(8)
- Explosives and blasting agents 29 CFR 1910.109(g)(4)(vi)(f)
- Sanitation 29 CFR 1910.141(a)(3)
- Material handling 29 CFR 1910.176(c)
- Grain handling facilities 29 CFR 1910.272(j)
- Asbestos 29 CFR 1910.1001(k)
- Inorganic arsenic 29 CFR 1910.1018(k)
- Lead 29 CFR 1910.1025(h)
- Chromium VI 29 CFR 1910.1026(j)
- Cadmium 29 CFR 1910.1027(k)
- Bloodborne pathogens 29 CFR 1910.1030(d)(4)
- 1,2 – dibromo-3-chloropropane 29 CFR 1910.1044(k)
- Acrylonitrile 29 CFR 1910.1045(k)
- Formaldehyde 29 CFR 1910.1048(j)
- Methylenedianiline 29 CFR 1910.1050(l)
- Silica 29 CFR 1910.1053(h)

New Walking and Working Surfaces (WWS) Standard

On November 17, 2016, OSHA published a revised WWS rule in the Federal Register with an effective date of January 17, 2017. The rule updates the general industry WWS standard specific to slip, trip and fall hazards – common issues in unkempt workplaces.

29 CFR 1910.22

The revised general industry workplace housekeeping requirements are referenced

in 29 CFR 1910.22. Employers must ensure that:

- 22(a)(1): All places of employment, passageways, storerooms, service rooms, and walking working surfaces are kept in a clean, orderly, and sanitary condition.
- 22(a)(2):. The floor of each workroom is maintained in a clean and, to the extent feasible, in a dry condition. When wet processes are used, drainage must be maintained and, to the extent feasible, dry standing places, such as false floors, platforms, and mats must be provided.
- 22(a)(3): Walking-working surfaces are maintained free of hazards such as sharp or protruding objects, loose boards, corrosion, leaks, spills, snow, and ice.
- 22(d)(1): Walking-working surfaces are inspected regularly and as necessary, and maintained in a safe condition.
- 22(d)(2): Hazardous conditions on walking-working surfaces are corrected or repaired before an employee uses the walking-working surface again. If the correction or repair cannot be made immediately, the hazard must be guarded to prevent employees from using the walking-working surface until the hazard is corrected or repaired.

Maintaining A Housekeeping Program

In order to ensure that proper workplace housekeeping is maintained, a continuous process involving both workers and custodial personnel is required. Housekeeping should be incorporated into all processes, operations and tasks performed in the workplace. Efforts should be concentrated in high traffic areas, such as around stairs, platforms and ladders; around work stations and machines; and in storage areas. Each worker needs to understand that workplace housekeeping is an integral part of his/her job and not merely a supplement to work he/she already performs. And, as workplace housekeeping becomes a standard part of operations, less time and effort are needed to maintain it at an appropriate level.

Use walk-through surveys to identify, evaluate and control the hazards that may be created by the lack of proper workplace housekeeping. These surveys send a message to all employees that workplace housekeeping is viewed as an important part of everyone’s job. A survey checklist is an effective tool to track performance and to communicate successes and areas requiring additional attention.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is responsible for workplace housekeeping?

A: All employees share the responsibilities of keeping their work stations and work areas free from the accumulation of materials. Additional responsibilities are often assigned to custodial employees or specific departmental employees.

Q: When should workplace housekeeping efforts be performed?

A: Workplace housekeeping levels are most easily maintained if they are completed throughout the day as needed. At the end of the shift, all areas should be thoroughly cleaned in preparation for the next day or the following shift.

Q: Is a written program required?

A: No. OSHA does not require a written housekeeping program for general industry. However, there is a reference to written housekeeping procedures that may be applicable under the fire prevention plan standard 29 CFR 1910.39(b) and 1910.39(c)(2):

29 CFR 1910.39(b)”Written and oral fire prevention plans. A fire prevention plan must be in writing, be kept in the workplace, and be made available to employees for review. However, an employer with 10 or fewer employees may communicate the plan orally to employees.” In accordance with 1910.39(c)(2) a fire prevention plan must include “procedures to control accumulations of flammable and combustible waste materials.”

Source

29 CFR Subpart D Walking and Working Surfaces, Revised November 2016.
29 CFR 1910, OSHA General Industry Standards

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