Keep it Clean

Safety Talk

Whether you are a machinist, a driver or a computer jockey, workplace housekeeping is part of your job.

A neat and orderly workplace—any kind of workplace—can help reduce injuries.

Good housekeeping can help prevent:

- Injury or death resulting from a trip or fall
- Injury or death after being struck by an out-of-place object
- 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
- Lack of future work due to a reputation for poor quality and practices

It is not a guarantee that all clean workplaces are safe, but it is safe to say few messy workplaces are safe. Good housekeeping doesn't just happen. It requires effort and teamwork. Standards need to be set and followed. Employees should be involved in determining the standards for a particular location.

Sometimes housekeeping practices are established after a brush with disaster. After a fire or a fall resulting from poor housekeeping, cleanup seems much more important. But it should not have to take an injury or a close call before housekeeping becomes a priority.

Checklists are a big help in measuring how well housekeeping standards are being met. You can use a standard industry list, or help develop one for your own workplace.

Here are some recommended housekeeping practices.

- Keep work areas clean, free of clutter and arranged properly.
- Keep aisles, exits and entrances free of obstructions.
- Keep floors clean, dry and in good condition.
- Vacuum or sweep dusty areas frequently.
- Store all work materials in approved, clearly-labeled containers in designated storage areas only.
- Use proper waste containers.
- Keep sprinklers, fire alarms and fire extinguishers clear.
- Clean up spills and leaks of any type quickly and properly.
- Clean and store tools and equipment properly.
- Fix or report broken or damaged tools and equipment.
- Watch for wear and damage to electrical cables, cords, plugs and outlets.
- Remove from service any electrical equipment which has had makeshift repairs by unqualified, unauthorized personnel.
- Watch for signs of overloaded electrical circuits.
- Keep lighting sources clean and clear.
- Follow maintenance requirements.

Good housekeeping can be a real morale booster. It should be encouraged as a way of life—not just a special activity when visitors are coming.