Three Types of Poor Housekeeping Hazards Meeting Kit

EFFECTS OF POOR HOUSEKEEPING

Housekeeping at work is as important as it is at home, especially if you want a safe workplace. People who must function every day in a messy, disorderly work environment have lower morale, although they may not be aware of the cause. But the safety ramifications of poor housekeeping in the workplace are even more important.

THREE TYPES OF HAZARDS RESULTING FROM POOR HOUSEKEEPING

1. Slip, trip, and fall hazards- One of the most common type of hazards created by poor housekeeping are slip, trip, and fall hazards. When objects, materials, tools, and equipment are not properly stored workers are bound to trip over them. Slippery conditions are created when water, moisture, oils, grease, etc. are left on the floor in work areas. Fall hazards are created when employees have to stand on make shift surfaces to reach items stored at higher levels. Falls also occur when changes in elevation are not properly marked or barricaded in work areas.
2. Strain and sprain hazards- Sprain and strain injuries can result from slip, trip, and fall incidents. They also can occur when heavy items are not properly put away. When heavy or awkward objects are placed on the floor and need to be picked up by a worker it creates a risk for injury. Too often items have to be moved when there is poor housekeeping in a work area just for the sake of getting them out of the way. Because of unnecessary lifting, sprains and strains can

occur.

3. Laceration hazards- Whether you are working in a construction or a manufacturing setting, there are plenty of sharp objects that can cut your hand or body. When items are not properly stored this creates a huge risk for laceration injuries. Sharp tools, jagged metal, sharp edged material, etc. can all easily cut through a glove or clothing and injure a worker.

ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE HOUSEKEEPING PROGRAM?

Maintenance: The maintenance of buildings and equipment may be the most important element of good housekeeping. Maintenance involves keeping buildings, equipment and machinery in safe, efficient working order and in good repair.

Dust and Dirt Removal: Enclosures and exhaust ventilation systems may fail to collect dust, dirt and chips adequately. Vacuum cleaners are suitable for removing light dust and dirt that is not otherwise hazardous. Special-purpose vacuums are useful for removing hazardous products.

Employee Facilities: Employee facilities need to be adequate, clean and well maintained. Lockers may be necessary for storing employees' personal belongings. Washroom facilities require cleaning once or more each shift. They also need to have a good supply of soap, towels plus disinfectants, if needed.

Surfaces Floors: Poor floor conditions are a leading cause of incidents so cleaning up spilled oil and other liquids at once is important.

Walls: Light-coloured walls reflect light while dirty or dark-coloured walls absorb light. Contrasting colours warn of physical hazards and mark obstructions such as pillars.

Maintain Light Fixtures: Dirty light fixtures reduce essential light levels. Clean light fixtures can improve lighting efficiency

significantly.

Aisles and Stairways: Aisles should be wide enough to accommodate people and vehicles comfortably and safely. Aisle space allows for the movement of people, products and materials. Warning signs and mirrors can improve sight-lines in blind corners.

Spill Control: The best way to control spills is to stop them before they happen. When spills do occur, clean them up immediately.

Tools and Equipment: Tool housekeeping is very important, whether in the tool room, on the rack, in the yard, or on the bench.

Waste Disposal: The regular collection, grading and sorting of scrap contribute to good housekeeping practices. It also makes it possible to separate materials that can be recycled from those going to waste disposal facilities.

Storage: Good organization of stored materials is essential for overcoming material storage problems whether on a temporary or permanent basis.

Stacking cartons and drums on a firm foundation and cross tying them, where necessary, reduces the chance of their movement. All storage areas should be clearly marked.

Flammable, combustible, toxic and other hazardous materials should be stored in approved containers.

HOW TO AVOID UNNECESSARY HOUSEKEEPING INJURIES

Injuries endured due to poor housekeeping can be 100% avoided. These types of problems do not need to happen if the employees will be responsible for their surroundings and take the right amount of caution that is needed. Each employee should take charge of their own workspace, pay attention to the three main types of hazards, and do the necessary cleaning to avoid them.

SIGNS OF POOR HOUSEKEEPING

A workplace that is not practicing good housekeeping techniques is only setting up themselves for disaster.

- Dirty Counters and Floors
- Spills and Leaks Not Being Cleaned
- No Organization
- Dirty Bathrooms
- Tools Left Out
- Not Having Proper Signs Visible

FINAL WORD

The injuries that result from poor work area conditions simply do not have to occur. These types of injuries are 100% preventable. Take time to evaluate your work areas today. Look for these three common hazard types. Take action to eliminate them so they do not have the chance to injure you or a coworker.