

ARCHIVE

Good Housekeeping in Industry



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What is good housekeeping?

Efficient production and a good working environment are complementary. The elimination of inefficiencies and accident hazards caused by unfavourable conditions in and about the workplace is essential in getting the job done properly and safely.

The attention to these important details—which may be overlooked when management’s attention is concentrated upon such amenities as good cloakrooms, canteens, rest rooms, recreational facilities, etc.—is widely referred to as “good housekeeping”.

Good housekeeping involves every phase of industrial operations and should apply throughout the entire premises, indoors and out. It is more than mere cleanliness. It requires orderly conditions, the avoidance of congestion, and attention to such details as an orderly layout of the whole workplace, the marking of aisles, adequate storage arrangements, and suitable provision for cleaning and maintenance.

This booklet explains what’s involved in good housekeeping and how you can apply it in your business.

Why good housekeeping matters

A clean, well-ordered, attractive work environment sets the tone of your establishment. It encourages tidy work habits in employees. It helps reduce fatigue. It promotes good worker-management relations. It also gives a lift to morale, which is reflected in the quality of production and overall efficiency.

Good housekeeping is also a good advertisement for your company. Customers and clients have more confidence in an organisation when they see work being carried out efficiently in clean, pleasant, well-ordered surroundings.

There's an even more important reason why good housekeeping matters — it makes the undertaking a safer place to work in.

Stop accidents through good housekeeping

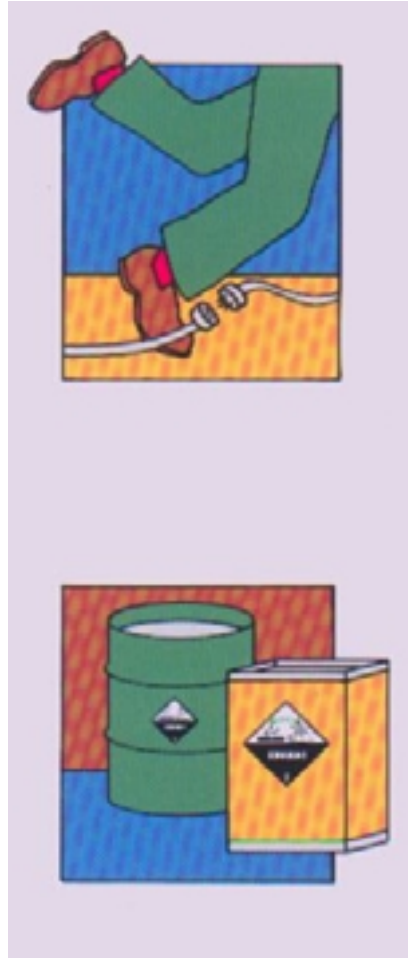
Good housekeeping is a vital factor in preventing accidents. The great majority of all work accidents are caused during the handling of goods or materials, and by people falling, being hit by falling objects, or striking against objects in the workplace. All these causes can be reduced by good housekeeping practices—in fact, good housekeeping is the only cure for hundreds of accidents that occur.

Here are some kinds of accidents commonly caused by *bad* housekeeping:

- Tripping over loose objects on floors, stairs and platforms.
- Articles dropping from above.
- Slipping on greasy, wet or dirty surfaces.
- Striking against projecting, poorly stacked, or misplaced material.
- Tearing the hands or other parts of the body on projecting nails, wire, steel strapping on bales or crates, etc.

Typical examples of poor housekeeping that lead to these accidents are:

- Excessive material, waste or chips in the working area.
- Congested aisles.
- Tools left on machines.
- Waste containers overflowing.
- Lockers and workrooms in disorder.
- Acids in open containers.
- Broken glass.
- Electric leads or air lines across aisles.
- Dirty light fittings, windows and skylights.



Where housekeeping is bad, fire is a constant hazard. It can be caused by many housekeeping problems—such as oil-soaked rags and clothing igniting from spontaneous combustion; dust collectors not being properly or frequently cleaned; or piles of paper and other packing materials being allowed to accumulate.

Poor housekeeping can also lead to infestation by pests such as rodents and cockroaches and create serious health risks.



Elements of a good housekeeping campaign

The following are the basic elements of a good housekeeping campaign that need attention:

Aisles—Wide enough for traffic movements, marked off by floor lines from work positions and storage areas.

Space—Sufficient room for the individual to work.

Storage—Adequate and convenient space for materials and tools.

Materials Handling—Layout planned for materials flow, with efficient methods and equipment.

Ventilation—Good general ventilation plus local exhaust ventilation to remove air contaminants at the source.

Floors and Walls—Of construction and materials that are easy to keep clean and in good repair.

Lighting—Well-distributed artificial light and effective use of available daylight.

Amenities—Clean, up-to-date washrooms and lockers for clothing. A clean, inviting lunch room for employees to eat their meals.

Waste Removal—Adequate facilities to prevent congestion and disorder. Let us look at some of these elements in detail.

KEEP AISLES CLEAR: Aisle space should be reserved for the movement of personnel, products and materials. It should be kept clean and clear and should never be used for “bottleneck” or “overflow” storage. This also applies to passageways and emergency exits. Blind corners should be eliminated or be adequately protected by warning signs.

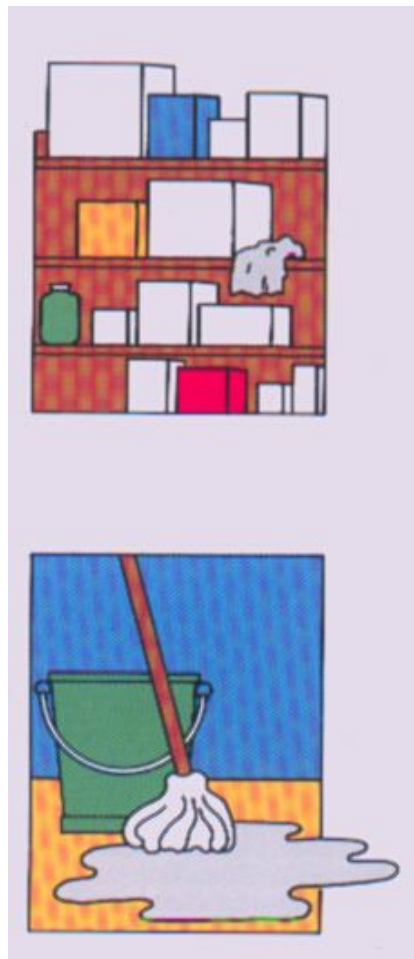


Aisle boundary markings should be drawn to show clearly the space which has been reserved for traffic.

Markings should be sufficiently wide (say a minimum of 30 mm) and of a colour to make them clearly visible. Paint or durable plastic strips can be used.

IMPROVE STORAGE FACILITIES: Tidiness and order are essential in overcoming storage problems, both in storerooms and in the yard. Good storage utilises air space instead of floor space, and also saves time-wasting delays. It's important to prevent stores and scraps accumulating on the floor and around machines. Never keep more stores and materials than necessary near machines and provide proper facilities (such as bins, shelves, boxes, racks, etc.) in which to store them.

KEEP FLOORS CLEAN: Every year thousands of work injuries are caused by people falling. Floor conditions are responsible for many of these accidents. When floors are given the right treatment they are much easier to keep clean and hygienic. Spilt oil and other liquids should be cleaned up at once. Chips, shavings, dust, and similar wastes should never be allowed to accumulate. They should be removed frequently, or better still, be suitably trapped before they reach the floor.

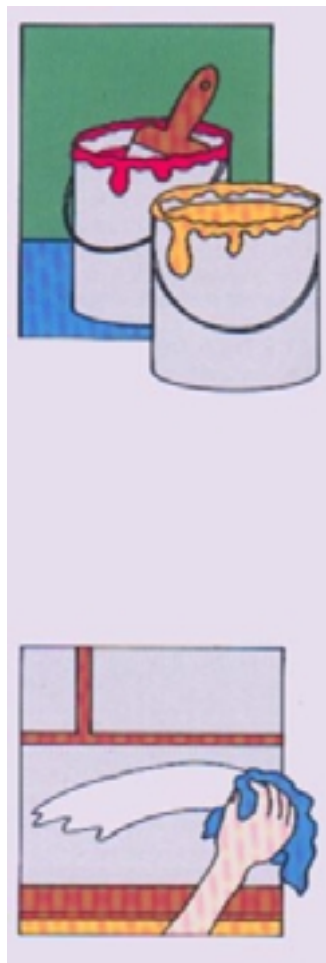


PAINT THE WALLS: Paint is one of the cheapest means of renovating walls, and a fresh coat of paint can give a boost to morale. Light-coloured walls reflect light. Dirty or dark-coloured walls absorb light. Dirty walls have a depressing effect and encourage dirty habits and sloppy attitudes. Choose suitable colours to paint walls, ceilings and working surfaces. See that the paintwork is cleaned down periodically.

Colour can be harnessed to assist with safety. For example it can be used to warn of physical hazards and to mark obstructions such as pillars. Painting handrails, machine guards and other safety equipment renders them distinctive and also prevents rust. Colour can be used to highlight the hazardous parts of machinery but it can never substitute for a needed guard.

MAINTAIN THE LIGHT FITTINGS: Attention to light fittings should be an integral part of any good housekeeping programme. Dirty lamps and shades, and lamps whose output has deteriorated with use, deprive employees of essential light. It's been found that lighting efficiency may be improved by 20 to 30 percent simply by cleaning the lamps and reflectors.

CLEAN THE WINDOWS: Clean windows let in light; dirty ones keep it out. Insufficient light causes eye strain and leads to accidents because employees are unable to see properly. Ensure that windows are not blocked by stacked materials, equipment or articles on the ledges.



DISPOSE OF SCRAP AND PREVENT SPILLAGE:

It's a common practice to let the floor catch all the waste and then spend time and energy cleaning it up. It is obviously better to provide convenient containers for scrap and waste and educate employees to use them. Safety will benefit, expense will be saved, and the factory will be a better place in which to work.

Oily floors are a common accident and fire hazard. Splash guards and drip pans should be installed wherever oil spills or drips may occur. Prevent accidents by keeping oil and grease off the floor.

GET RID OF DUST AND DIRT: In some jobs, dust, dirt, chips, etc., are unavoidable. If they can't be collected as part of the process (e.g. by enclosure and exhaust methods) you need a way to clean them up. Vacuum cleaners are suitable for removing light dust and dirt. Industrial models have special fittings for cleaning walls, ceilings, ledges, machinery, and other hard-to-reach places where dust and dirt collect.

If light dust is removed by sweeping, floors should be dampened first rather than swept dry. Oiling floors occasionally with a light oil helps to lay the dust but take care that slipping hazards do not occur.

Remember, it is not only floors that need sweeping. Dust and grime also collect on ledges, shelves, piping, conduits, lamps, reflectors, windows, cupboards, lockers, and so on—and all these places need attention.



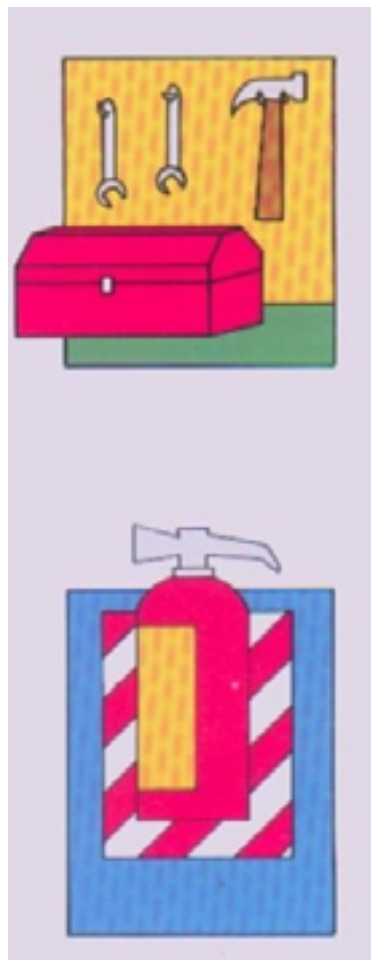
MAINTAIN A HIGH STANDARD IN MEAL ROOMS, REST ROOMS, ETC:

No housekeeping programme should ignore the facilities provided for meals, rest and sanitation, where cleanliness is essential for walls, floors, and fixtures. A light-coloured paint can work wonders in these places and set a standard to which employees will try to conform. Soap and towels should be renewed regularly and wash basins properly cleaned.

KEEP TOOLS TIDY: Tool housekeeping is very important, whether in the tool room, on the rack, out in the yard, or on the bench. Suitable fixtures for tools are required to provide orderly arrangement, both in the tool room and near the work bench, and a regular system of inspecting, cleaning, and repairing is an essential part of any programme.

LOOK AFTER YOUR FIRST AID GEAR: First aid facilities and equipment should be kept under spotlessly clean conditions and fully stocked so that they are always ready in the event of accidents or illness.

INSPECT FIRE-CONTROL EQUIPMENT: It is essential to ensure that all fire-fighting equipment such as extinguishers and firehoses is regularly inspected and kept in good working order. Fire-protection facilities — fire doors and exits, automatic alarms, etc.— should be in good working order. Doors and exits should always be kept clear of obstructions.



ATTEND REGULARLY TO MAINTENANCE:

Perhaps the most important element of good housekeeping is the attention paid to maintenance of buildings and equipment. If something gets broken or damaged it should be replaced or fixed as quickly as possible (e.g., defective ladders, broken handrails, steps, etc.). Apart from the possibility of causing accidents, a workplace can take on a very neglected appearance if broken windows, damaged doors, defective plumbing, leaking gutters, broken floor surfaces and the like are allowed to remain in that condition. Employees may take the hint in a neglectful attitude to their jobs.

A good maintenance programme will make provision for the inspection, lubrication, upkeep and repair of tools, equipment, machines and processes.

ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEANING:

Where practicable, the cleaning of the workplace should be the responsibility of a special cleaning staff and not an additional job for employees engaged in production. Where this is not possible, adequate time during working hours should be allowed for cleaning up to be done. Responsibility should be clearly assigned as to who is to do the cleaning and what area is to be cleaned. If this is not done, out-of-the-way places such as shelves, yards, small buildings, sheds, cellars, basements, and boiler rooms are overlooked until they get into a deplorable state.



PREPARE A CHECK LIST: A sound method to ensure that housekeeping is done is for management to prepare a check list to suit the requirements of the workplace. The following can serve as a guide for nearly all industries.



The good housekeeping checklist

Check off your housekeeping programme against this checklist. Better still, make a more comprehensive list of your own.

BUILDINGS

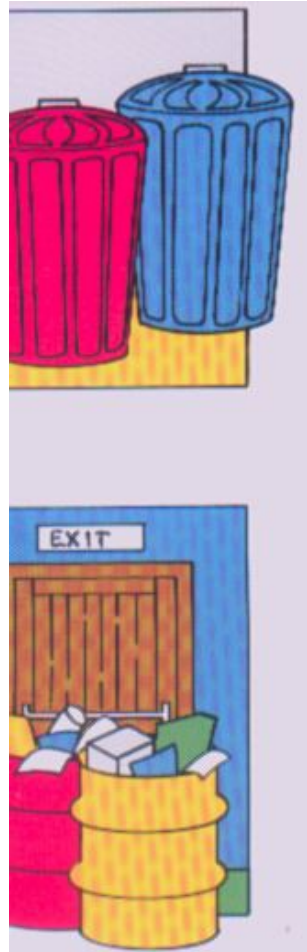
- (1) Walls clean.
- (2) Windows clean.
- (3) Walls free of unnecessary hangings.
- (4) Proper light provided.
- (5) Platforms in good condition.
- (6) Stairs clean and well lit. Handrails and steps of sound construction and well maintained.

FLOORS

- (1) Good floor surface.
- (2) Kept clean and free of loose material. Clean in corners, behind radiators, along walls, and around pillars or columns.
- (3) Free of oil, grease, etc.
- (4) Operating floors, or work positions free of loose scrap, metal or other materials.
- (5) Free of unnecessary articles.
- (6) Bins provided for refuse.

AISLES

- (1) Free of obstructions.
- (2) Safe and free passage to fire-fighting equipment and fire exits.
- (3) Safe and free access to work positions.
- (4) Clearly defined.



MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

- (1) Clean and free of unnecessary material.
- (2) Free of unnecessary dripping of oil or grease.
- (3) Area around machines clean and free of rags, paper, etc.
- (4) Lockers and cupboards clean and free of unnecessary material both on top and inside.
- (5) Benches and seats clean and in good condition.
- (6) Drinking fountains clean.
- (7) Toilet facilities clean and well ventilated.
- (8) Proper guards provided and in good condition.
- (9) First-aid facilities and equipment fully stocked and in clean condition.

STOCK AND MATERIAL

- (1) Properly piled and arranged
- (2) Kept in storage areas.

TOOLS

- (1) Properly arranged in place.
- (2) Free of oil and grease.
- (3) Inspected and maintained in good order.
- (4) Tool rooms and racks in clean and orderly condition.

GROUNDS

- (1) Yard and building surrounds free of refuse such as fruit peelings, scrap, wood, Iron, etc.
- (2) Grounds kept free of weeds and overgrown vegetation.
- (3) Wastes and refuse removed frequently.



Good housekeeping doesn't just happen

A good housekeeping programme can start only when management accepts responsibility for it. Management must plan it in the first place and then make sure it consistently enforces the measures decided upon.

A system of joint participation by employers and employees in developing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is described in the Department of Labour's Code *of Practice for Health and Safety Representatives and Health and Safety Committees*. The adoption of such a system will assist in promoting an effective housekeeping campaign.

Good housekeeping helps to create:

- Better working conditions
- Safer workplaces
- Greater efficiency.

It is not an unprofitable sideline. It is part of a good business.

Other publications

The Department of Labour publishes a wide range of codes of practice, booklets, leaflets and posters on industrial safety.

They are available from your nearest district office of the Department and titles include:

*A Guide to the Factories and Commercial/
Premises Act 1981*

Atmospheric Conditions in the workplace

*Code of Practice for Health and Safety
Representatives and Health and Safety
Committees*

Dust Explosions in Factories

First Aid for the Workplace

Guarding Transmission Machinery

Handling Loose Materials—Safety Guide

Industrial Overalls—Safety Guide

Occupational Noise—an Employer's Guide

Planning the Workplace

Safe Stacking and Storage

Safe Access

*Safety at Work—What Every Employee should
Know (English, Samoan and Tongan versions)*

Safety Hints for Users of Lifting Gear

Safety with Corrosive Chemicals

Spray Coating—a Guide to the Regulations 1962

Training of Machine Operators—a Brief Guide

Welding Safety

