

TOOLBOX TALKS

A Clean Worksite is a safe Worksite

Maintaining good housekeeping is an important part of the overall job of supervision. There are a number of advantages to having a clean and orderly plant, including: avoidance of accidents, better fire prevention, improved health of employees, and increased worker efficiency and morale.

Avoidance of accidents is one of the major goals of any company. That occasional piece of scrap or wet spot on the floor can cause slip, trip, and fall hazards. Cluttered aisles and congested work areas can add to the dangers. A thorough, regular, and successful program of good housekeeping that eliminates hazards makes good sense for everyone.

Housekeeping can appear to be a never-ending and thankless job, but if too much dirt, debris, and disorder are allowed to accumulate, this can eventually lead to production problems caused by increased accidents, absenteeism, and turnover. Typically, you will find that places that have good housekeeping will have competent supervisors and a low accident rate.

People don't really enjoy working in areas that are disorderly and crowded with booby traps. They don't want to continuously climb over excessive accumulations of spilled material, be hit by objects falling from above, or scrape up against poorly placed materials.

Keeping everything in order will prevent these incidents from occurring.

A responsible supervisor knows that good housekeeping cannot be maintained simply by an occasional large cleanup. It must be planned on a regular basis. It should also be a part of everyone's daily routine.

Here are some real life examples of what did happen because of bad housekeeping:

- A mechanic fractured his ankle after he slipped on oil while climbing down from a piece of equipment.
- A machinist slipped on a wet floor and sprained his back.
- An electrician stepped on a tool while climbing down a ladder and sprained his ankle.

All of these accidents could have been prevented through better housekeeping. With good housekeeping, you can reduce operating costs, increase production, and prevent injuries. Good housekeeping is just good business.

Checklist for Housekeeping

- Is your workplace neat and orderly?
- Have you emphasized the importance of housekeeping to your workers on a regular basis?
- Do your employees know that housekeeping is everyone's responsibility?
- Are spills and slippery spots cleaned up immediately?
- Are employees provided with adequate storage areas to put tools and other work items away?
- Do employees use tool belts or work aprons while working on scaffolds or climbing ladders?
- Are oily rags stored in self-closing, fireproof containers?
- Is excess debris removed several times a day from the premises?

