

Clean It Up and Keep It Clean

Most accidents result from multiple causes, and one cause involved in many instances of mishap and injury is that the area was messy, slippery, or piled with materials, which prevented normal operations. Cleanliness -good housekeeping is one of the basic elements of accident prevention.

Sure, housekeeping can seem to be an endless job with no reward, but if too much debris, dirt, or disorder are allowed to build up, unexpected booby traps accumulate with them.

That occasional piece of slick paper or oily spot on the floor can cause someone to slip and fall and result in a pulled back or bruised knee. Cluttered aisles, congested work areas, and other results of poor housekeeping are all open invitations to trouble. For example:

- A worker who stepped on a production piece left lying on the floor lost 10 workdays due to a severely sprained ankle.
- Another employee stepped from a ladder onto a spill which no one had cleaned. Result? A slip followed by 9 days out of work for with a wrenched back.
- Some boards were left on a walkway at the finish of a project. Trying to step over them, a worker wound up with a twisted knee and was on light-duty work for a week.

Many of you can probably recall similar incidents here or at a previous workplace, where accidents were at least partly caused by something that wasn't swept up or wiped up or put away when it should have been.

Whereas disorder is unpleasant and hazardous, an orderly, neat work area will help prevent accidents and even enable you to be more productive in your work. If you want order to prevail, you must contribute to keeping the environment tidy by making sure that things are placed where they should be each and every time you're through using them. A once-in-a-while grand cleanup will not do, although you may need to undertake a first big housecleaning, in order to get started. After that, a constant effort must be made to keep your area clean or conditions will soon slide back to the mess

you had before. Make order and cleanliness a regular habit, and after only a week or two the cleanup won't seem to be an effort.

Who is responsible for keeping things clean and orderly? You and everyone else. And everyone who wants to keep the workplace safe and pleasant to work in will shoulder that responsibility readily. Unfortunately, it takes just one bad housekeeper to set a disruptive example. Don't be that bad example. It also takes just one tidy individual who cares about safety and the quality of his or her work to be a positive model for everyone else. Could that be you?

If there is a mess in the area you are responsible for, set it right. If the area is someone else's responsibility, notify that person. But don't just leave a hazard while you are on your way to tell someone else. Alert the workers around you and put up a barrier in the meantime unless it will cause more of a hazard.

Don't let cleanup be a dangerous job either. Take appropriate safety precautions such as using the right equipment for cleaning spills. Don't just reach into a pile of broken glass with your bare hands get a broom and dustpan and wear gloves, if necessary.

Be alert, too, to the hazards that can appear seemingly without warning such as dirt that has blown in the door and could get in the equipment and cause a breakdown, or a floor tile that has suddenly popped up. Take care of those you can handle by yourself, and report anything needing special tools or skills to the proper person. You'll be justly proud of knowing that you did your part for your own safety and that of others.

Brush Up on Paint Safety