

## Bad Housekeeping Is Kid Stuff

I'm sure just about all of you are familiar with the stage play and television show "The Odd Couple." If you haven't seen the show, at least you've heard about it. Probably not too many of you really identify with Felix Unger, who makes such a big deal out of housekeeping. On the other hand, many do have at least some empathy with Oscar Madison.

Although he's depicted as an overgrown slob, with housekeeping the furthest thing from his mind, some see him as just a perennial teenager—and perhaps some consider him an admirably free spirit.

Those of you with children can remember or look forward to their teen years, when you sometimes wondered just what was on their minds—it certainly wasn't housekeeping. Others of you may have that messy phase "to look forward to," possibly with dread, since it seems to go with age.

### A Business Connection

What does this have to do with the work environment? Actually, a great deal. Housekeeping is a very important part of efficiency, safety, and cost control. Good housekeeping can also have a significant impact on the business a company is able to attract.

Imagine that you are a supplier, entertaining a visitor who is looking for a company that can produce his product at an affordable cost. You want the public areas of your establishment to be a showcase—neat and clean, and perhaps displaying samples of your best work to impress the prospective customer with your abilities.

This is a sensible approach, because a visitor who notes dingy windows, and unattended spill, trash that didn't quite make it to the waste-bin, and other evidence of sloppy housekeeping may well take his or her business elsewhere. That's because a cluttered and disorganized workplace tends to suggest immaturity or poor organization skills, and leads to doubts about the quality and reliability of the work itself.

Just as housekeeping can reveal a lot about the overall character of a business, it can also say a lot for what a company thinks about safety, because poor housekeeping allows a variety of hazards to "lie in wait for" an unwary worker. In any successful safety program, safety gets its equal share of management attention along with production schedules, quality, cost, etc. And good housekeeping furthers the achievement of those goals, whereas poor housekeeping works against them.

So your attention to housekeeping contributes to your own and your co-workers' safety—and also to the efficiency and success of the business. That should be powerful

motivation, because your own job is only as secure as your company is sound and its business profitable.