



# Safety Bulletin

## Uncovering Hidden Hazards

2024

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### Importance of housekeeping

Poor housekeeping frequently contributes to mishaps by hiding hazards. Hidden hazards can cause accidents such as tripping over materials left on floors and other walkways; being hit by falling objects; slipping on greasy, wet or dirty floors; running into poorly stored items; or cutting, puncturing or tearing the skin of hands or other body parts on sharp, projecting materials. More serious safety hazards may be easily overlooked if storage areas are unorganized, hallways are cluttered or floors are left wet. To avoid these hazards, a workplace must maintain good housekeeping practices throughout the day.

Good housekeeping habits support risk management practices by helping us identify, assess, and mitigate or eliminate hazards in the workplace. However, there's more to housekeeping than just cleanliness. It also includes keeping work areas neat and orderly; storing items properly; ensuring floors and other work surfaces are free of slip and trip hazards; and removing waste materials (e.g., paper, cardboard) and other fire hazards.

### Regulatory requirements

The relationship between good housekeeping and a safe working environment is widely recognized as a best practice. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires "all places of employment, passageways, storerooms, and service rooms shall be kept clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition" (29 CFR 1910.22 (a)). Maintaining good housekeeping is also required by Department of the Army Pamphlet 385-10, Army Safety Program, paragraph 14-8 b (3), which states, "Storage areas will be kept free from accumulation of materials that constitute hazards from tripping, fire, explosion, or pest harborage."

### Developing good housekeeping practices

Good housekeeping practices require intentional planning, a clean-up standing operating procedure or policy, an effective inspection process, and continuous supervision and enforcement of housekeeping rules. Develop a daily clean-up policy and periodically review housekeeping rules, policies and procedures. Your written housekeeping plan or program should include the following key elements:

- Worker training
- A routine maintenance and housekeeping schedule
- Assignment of worker responsibilities

**GOOD  
HOUSEKEEPING**



**PROMOTES  
SAFETY**

**DO YOUR PART**



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### Best practices

One best practice to create and maintain a clean, orderly and safe work environment is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 6S method. The 6S is based upon the five pillars (5S) of the visual workplace in the Toyota Production System, plus a separate pillar for safety (5S + Safety):

- 1.Sort (Get rid of it). Separate what is needed in the work area from what is not; eliminate the latter.
- 2.Set in order (Organize). Organize what remains in the work area.
- 3.Shine (Clean and solve). Clean and inspect the work area.
- 4.Safety (Respect workplace and employee). Create a safe place to work.
- 5.Standardize (Make consistent). Standardize cleaning, inspection and safety practices.
- 6.Sustain (Keep it up). Make 6S a way of life.

Remember, good housekeeping practices are not only required by laws and regulations, they also protect you and your team by reducing workplace hazards.

### FYI

#### Housekeeping Tips

- Wear eye protection.
- Use hearing protection with loud equipment, such as a leaf blower.
- Wear gloves to protect hands while picking up debris.
- Be aware of traffic and warn traffic of work ahead.
- Wear proper footwear to protect feet.
- Review safety precautions for tools and equipment (ladders, lawnmowers).
- Keep floors clean, dry and free of debris and in good condition.
- Ensure aisles and stairways are clearly marked and well lit; have good stair treads; are unobstructed; and are free of temporary storage.
- Promptly clean up spills. Use proper absorbent rags for greasy, oily materials and dispose of used rags properly and promptly.
- Inspect equipment regularly, use drip pans to contain leaks, repair/report broken tools, return equipment and tools to their proper place after use. Also inspect service guards and safety features to ensure they are operational.
- Properly dispose of waste, ensuring you have an adequate number of containers, including those approved for toxic and flammable waste. Empty those containers regularly.
- Stack materials neatly, placing heavy or bulky items on the bottom. Keep cabinet doors and drawers closed when not in use.

