

# SAFETY TALK

## Workplace Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is an effective way to eliminate potential hazards in the workplace. Good housekeeping practices involve material management and storage throughout your entire workplace. It also includes a material flow plan to ensure minimal handling. Employees should be encouraged to report any unusual hazards or conditions to their supervisor. Lastly, semi-annual shop inspections are essential tools that are used to find, recognize, and mitigate hazards that arise in the workplace.

### Light Fixtures

All buildings need adequate lighting. Light fixtures with non-working light tubes need to be replaced. Storage areas that contain combustible materials should have explosion proof light fixtures installed. Lighting must be distributed evenly to eliminate shadows or dark spots in the workplace.

### Flooring

Keep floors dry and clear of trash and debris will eliminate slip, trip, and fall accidents. All spills should be cleaned up immediately. All sawdust, shavings, or clippings should be swept up or vacuumed once the cutting has ceased. Areas that cannot be cleaned continuously, such as entranceways, should have anti-slip flooring. Replace flooring that has been worn, ripped, or damaged, as this poses a tripping hazard. Portable power tools or hand tools should be removed from the work area and placed in storage if they are not in use. All floor openings must be guarded to prevent serious fall.

### Chemical Spill Clean-up

Routine cleaning and maintenance of machines and equipment is a good way of eliminating spills. Another is to use drip pans and guards where possible spills might occur. If a chemical spill does occur, it is important to follow your workplace spill cleanup procedures. Part of the procedure should involve using the Safety Data Sheet for advice on how to clean the spill and protect yourself from the chemical hazard. Absorbent material is useful for wiping up greasy, oily or other liquid spills. Used absorbents must be disposed of properly and safely.

### Aisles and Stairways

Aisles and stairways must be kept clear of all objects that can cause trips and falls. Aisles should have three feet of clearance and any items that protrude into the aisle should be removed immediately. Warning signs and mirrors can prevent collisions by improving sight lines at blind corners. Stairways and aisles also require adequate lighting.



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## Tools and Equipment

Keeping tools and equipment neat and orderly will improve efficiency as well as safety in the workplace. Tools that are not in use should be returned to their storage areas promptly to reduce the chance of them being lost or misplaced. Workers should be trained to regularly inspect, clean and store all of their tools. Any tool or piece of equipment that is in need of maintenance or repair should be removed from service until repairs can be made.

## Maintenance

A good maintenance program provides for the inspection, maintenance, upkeep and repair of tools, equipment, machines and processes. Routine maintenance of equipment and machinery must be conducted and recorded in your workplace maintenance log. Building maintenance should also be conducted as this involves painting and cleaning walls, maintaining windows, damaged doors, leaky plumbing, and broken tile or floor surfaces.

## Waste Disposal

Disposal of trash, dust, clippings, and miscellaneous material is essential to good housekeeping practices. Waste should not be allowed to build up on the floor as this poses a slip, trip, and fall hazard. Scrap containers should be placed near where the waste is produced as this makes waste collection and disposal much easier. Waste receptacles should be clearly labeled with their contents and should be emptied out regularly.

## Material Storage

Safe storage practices are essential for good housekeeping. Heavy items stored above six feet, should have restraints in place to prevent them from falling. Workers should not store items on top of personal lockers, cabinets, or machinery that are taller than six feet, as they were not meant for storage. Stored materials should allow at least 18 inches of clearance under sprinkler heads, or two feet of clearance under the ceiling where there are no sprinklers present. Stored materials should not obstruct aisles, stairs, doorways, fire equipment, emergency shower or eyewash stations, first aid stations, machinery shut-offs and electrical panels. Designated storage areas should be clearly marked.

## Fire Prevention

Flammable, combustible, toxic and other hazardous materials should be kept in approved containers and stored in designated areas. Flammable or combustible material above ten gallons must be kept in a flammable storage cabinet. Flammable storage cabinets are required to be self-closing. Chemical storage inside of flammables cabinets should be labeled, free of rust or corrosion, not stacked, and free of any cardboard or other combustibles. Lastly, oily or greasy rags should be placed in a metal container and disposed of as hazardous waste regularly.



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## Safety Talk Sign-in Sheet Topic Workplace Housekeeping

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Crew: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Talk Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

Signature

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