

HOUSEKEEPING FOR SAFETY

Good Housekeeping is Crucial to Maintaining Safe Workplaces

Utilizing good housekeeping practices can help prevent injuries and lead to improvements in morale and productivity.

Basic tips for effective workplace housekeeping are as follows:

- Slips, trips and falls are a leading cause of nonfatal workplace injuries. Workplaces that are kept clean, orderly, dry and sanitary contribute to a greater sense of pride for all and help to eliminate hazards.
- Proper storing and disposal of flammable materials can help to eliminate possible workplace fire hazards. In addition, regular inspection of extinguishers, sprinklers and any other mitigation systems will help to ensure they function properly if needed. Ensure that fire extinguisher and hose locations are clearly marked, areas in front of them are clear and they are readily accessible.
- Storage of materials properly helps to eliminate risks. Aisles and walkways should be clear, materials should be stacked straight up and down to prevent tipping. When stored on shelving heavy objects should be kept at lower levels with lighter objects on upper shelves. Toe boards or rails can be utilized to keep materials from falling and hitting workers or other equipment.
- Electrical panels should have voltages clearly and properly marked, areas in front of panels should be free of clutter.
- Trash receptacles should be emptied regularly, always before they reach the point of overflow.
- Written rules should be created that define responsibility, protocols and defined training requirements. All workers should participate in housekeeping, especially in their own work areas and should take an active part in reporting and addressing potential hazards.
- A regular schedule of walkthroughs and audits accompanied by record keeping is necessary to sustain good housekeeping. Baseline auditing outlines should be created for each area that set goals and expectations.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements should be clearly outlined for each workplace.
- Tools and equipment should be properly inspected prior to use and stored properly when not in use.
- Building exits should be clearly marked and doorways kept free of clutter.

Consult OSHA, NFPA, local fire codes and your railroad rules for regulatory requirements and guidance.