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HOUSEKEEPING

More than Spring Cleaning: The Importance of Housekeeping

As spring draws near, it's a good time to start thinking about putting away the snow shovels and bringing out the brooms. Housekeeping at work involves more than just sweeping the floors of course, but a clean floor certainly lays a solid foundation of good housekeeping practices. Poor housekeeping can cause accidents, slow down production, bring down morale, and create extra work for everyone.

What Message Are You Sending?

Just as a clean floor lays the foundation for sound housekeeping practices, housekeeping, or lack thereof, sends a message to everyone who walks through your doors. This includes visitors, potential clients, your workers, and safety and health inspectors. Whether it's true or not, good housekeeping sends the message that management places a high value on safety and health; bad housekeeping sends the message that safety and health is an afterthought at best.

Signs of Poor Housekeeping

Do you recognize any of these signs of poor housekeeping in your work area or at your workplace?

1. Cluttered and poorly organized work areas.
2. Dangerous storage of materials. For example, items stacked haphazardly on shelves, or shoved into corners, overcrowded storage areas.
3. Dirty, cluttered floors and work surfaces.
4. Blocked aisles and exits.
5. Tools and equipment not properly put away and stored when not in use.
6. Trash bins overflowing, items not disposed of properly.
7. Spills and leaks.

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Coming Clean

The first step to a cleaner and safer workplace is to establish housekeeping standards. These standards should be clear, attainable and enforced. Next, train workers on what is expected of them, where things go, how to properly store and dispose of hazardous items, such as chemicals and waste, where to find cleaning supplies and storage areas. Then be sure you have the supplies and tools for workers to use. Finally, measure how well housekeeping standards are being met. On a regular basis conduct housekeeping audits and follow up on those items that need to be corrected or addressed. Enlist the help of your safety committee if you have one.

Areas of Focus

While every location is different, there are common areas in almost every workplace that should be focused on with regards to housekeeping. These are:

- 1. Fire Safety:** Walkways, stairways and exits must be clear of clutter and debris. This not only prevents slips and falls, but allows for the safe and orderly evacuation in the event of a fire or other emergency. Exits should never be blocked or locked from the outside. Don't block sprinkler heads, fire extinguishers, or other emergency equipment. Keep material and equipment at least 18 inches (46 centimeters) away from sprinkler heads.
- 2. Flammable Hazards:** Dust accumulation is a significant fire and explosion hazard; ensure adequate ventilation and cleanup procedures are in place and being used. Store all flammable and combustible liquids in approved and properly labeled containers and only in designated storage areas.
- 3. Clutter:** Keeping floors and work surfaces free of clutter and debris is helpful in several ways. One, it helps reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls. Two, it makes it easier to find things and saves workers time by not having to hunt something down each time they need it. Three, it protects tools and equipment from damage. Four, it generally improves morale, production and efficiency and encourages everyone to take housekeeping seriously.
- 4. Lighting:** Ensure lighting is adequate for the entire workspace, inside and out, as well as task lighting at the worker level. Don't forget to light stairways and storage areas either. Lighting is key to safety in these areas too.
- 5. Spills and Leaks:** Procedures should be in place for prompt cleanup of spills and leaks. Train workers on how to properly clean up after a spill and when and how to report spills and leaks. Instruct workers to put lids and caps back on containers and bottles after every use. Enforce maintenance procedures for machines and equipment to help contain leaks and overspray from machines. Install drip pans when necessary to collect overspray and keep it off the floor.
- 6. Waste Disposal:** Outline and train workers on the proper way to dispose of waste and materials. For example, provide closed metal containers for oily rag disposal and have a procedure for frequent emptying of the containers. Provide and train on the proper disposal of sharps and biological waste. Take out trash and recycling on a regular basis so it doesn't have a chance to pile up.
- 7. Storage Areas:** Set up storage areas so there is adequate space to store and retrieve materials safely. Stored materials should not be in the way of work but should be readily and easily available when needed. This will cut down on the risk of strain injuries by reducing the amount of handling required. Stack items securely; on a firm foundation, not too high, blocked if necessary to prevent movement, (drums, spools, etc.). Finally, ensure the safe and proper segregation of flammable, combustible and toxic materials.
- 8. Tools and Equipment:** Create safe tool and equipment storage areas and train workers to safely store them when not in use. Ensure workers regularly inspect tools and equipment, keep them clean, and report defective or damaged tools immediately so they can be taken out of service until they are fixed or replaced.



Conclusion

Remember, housekeeping is an ongoing process. It is not a once a year marathon cleaning session, or a mad panic to clean up before an inspection or client visit. It is a daily endeavor. Use checklists, daily, weekly, monthly, and annually, to help you and your workers keep on task. ❖

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ABOUT US



POLICIES AND PRACTICES

PPE Checklist

Before you can know if workers need PPE, you must assess your workplace for hazards, which will help you select the appropriate PPE for any hazards present or likely to be present. Adapt this checklist for your safety program, workplace and PPE safety regulations. Use it to assess your workplace and identify the hazards by the body parts affected.

Head	YES	NO	Comments
Is work performed around beams, pipes, falling objects or electrical wires?			
Is machining performed, or equipment used with rotating parts?			
Is the proper PPE used (e.g. protective helmets, hairnets, bump-caps), does it fit properly and is it in good condition?			
Eye and Face	YES	NO	Comments
Are there flying particles, dust, hazardous chemicals, extreme heat or light?			
Is proper PPE used (e.g. safety goggles, face shields, weld masks), does it fit properly and is it in good condition?			
Ears and Hearing	YES	NO	Comments
Is there exposure to elevated noises or sudden loud noises?			
Is proper PPE used (e.g. ear plugs, ear muffs), does it fit properly and is it in good condition?			
Respiratory	YES	NO	Comments
Is there a respirator training and fit testing program in place?			
Is exposure to radiation possible?			
Is there dust, vapors, fumes or mist in the air?			
Is there potential for exposure to asbestos?			
Does respiratory equipment fit properly and is it in good condition?			
Body	YES	NO	Comments
Is work performed at elevated heights where a person could be injured by a fall?			
Does the work require continuous lifting, twisting or bending?			
Is the proper PPE used (e.g. fall restraint harnesses, lanyards), does it fit properly and is it in good condition?			
Hands, Arms, Feet, Legs	YES	NO	Comments
Does the work include pinch-points, irritating chemicals or extreme hot/cold?			
Is there heavy lifting or slippery surfaces?			
Is the proper PPE used (e.g. sleeves, chaps, work gloves, steel-toed boots), does it fit properly and is it in good condition?			
Person(s) Conducting Assessment:			
Date:			
Work Area/Job/Task:			

SCORECARD

Recent OSHA Cases & Fines

REGION 1

Ned Stevens Gutter Cleaning cited for fall protection violation as worker falls in Lexington from roof. An employee of Ned Stevens Gutter Cleaning and General Contracting of Massachusetts Inc. was injured when he fell 9 feet from a garage roof in Lexington on Oct. 24, 2016. It was the second such incident in Massachusetts in less than a year for the New Jersey-based company that specializes in cleaning gutters and roofs. On Nov. 29, 2015, another employee fell 26 feet from a roof in Newton. As a result, OSHA has now cited Ned Stevens for a repeat violation of fall protection requirements and proposed \$68,591 in fines for that violation. Read the press release [here](#).

Employee's death at Bellingham auto parts business 'preventable'. A Bellingham used auto parts business' failure to follow required workplace safety standards allowed an employee to suffer fatal head injuries, an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has found. The employee was working at John's Used Autos and Parts LLC when he was struck in the head by a chain come-a-long device as he attempted to inflate and mount a multi-piece rim wheel on a vehicle on Oct. 31, 2016. He later died on Nov. 11. Inspectors from the agency's Braintree Area Office determined that the company failed to provide adequate training and safeguards to protect the deceased worker and other employees while they serviced rim wheels. As a result of these conditions, OSHA cited John's Used Autos and Parts for 12 violations of workplace safety standards. Proposed penalties total \$27,157. Read the press release [here](#).

REGION 2

New York contractor cited for excavation hazards at high school construction site. A safety complaint filed against Landtek Group Inc., a New York-based general contractor, resulted in an OSHA inspection at Verona High School in Verona, N.J., where the company was constructing new tennis courts and turf fields. Inspectors found Landtek exposed workers to cave-in hazards by allowing them to work in an unprotected, 10-foot-deep excavation. Read the [news release](#) for more information.

REGION 5

Wisconsin metal fabricator cited for safety failures following teenager's death. A 17-year-old worker clearing scrap underneath a laser-cutting machine was killed when the machine lowered, pinning him beneath. He had been on the job two weeks. OSHA's investigation found that employer, G.D. Roberts & Co. Inc., in Columbus, Wis., failed to ensure that machines were properly de-energized to prevent unintentional movement. OSHA cited the company for 16 safety and health violations, including failure to train employees on proper lockout/tagout procedures, and proposed penalties of \$119,725. Read the [news release](#) for more information.

Medical clinic fined \$260,000 for exposing maintenance workers to asbestos. A Wisconsin medical clinic sent maintenance workers into crawl spaces and other areas previously identified by the company as containing hazardous asbestos material, an OSHA investigation found. "Monroe Clinic knew its employees were working amid materials known to contain asbestos, and failed to inform them of the location of hazards and to protect them from exposure to a known carcinogen," said Ann Grevenkamp, OSHA's area director in Madison. The company was cited for 12 safety and health violations, including failing to provide protective clothing and respiratory protection. Proposed penalties total \$261,890. Read the [news release](#) for more information.

Auto parts maker cited for numerous amputation and other hazards. During an inspection of Bosal Industries Georgia Inc., an automotive after-market parts manufacturer in Ypsilanti, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration found numerous violations that exposed workers to amputation hazards. Inspectors for the state agency determined that Bosal failed to provide machine guards on potentially hazardous machinery and failed to protect workers from an open manhole, among other violations. The company was cited for 19 violations and issued \$265,000 in penalties. For more information, see the [news release](#).

Contractor cited after collapse of unprotected trench kills worker. A Minnesota construction company was cited for failing to train and protect its employees following the collapse of an unprotected trench that trapped two workers, killing one of them. The Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a state agency, cited Dave Perkins Contracting Inc. of Anoka for three serious violations and issued \$50,825 in penalties.

REGION 6

Oklahoma truck bed manufacturer cited for safety and health violations. Big Tex Trailer Manufacturing Inc., a truck bed fabricator in Kingston, Okla., was cited for violations after an OSHA inspection found workers exposed to safety and health hazards. Among the violations cited, the company failed to provide workers with welding protections and allowed workers to operate hydraulic press brakes without machine guards in place. Read the [news release](#) for more information.

REGION 8

OSHA cites multiple employers after oil well flash fire kills one worker and burns three others in North Dakota. OSHA cited an oil well operator and two servicing companies following a flash fire that killed a worker and severely burned three others in Watford City, N.D. Operator XTO Energy and two servicing companies - Most Wanted Well Service LLC and Sherwood Enterprises Inc. - were cited for exposing workers to fire and explosion hazards and failing to provide flame-resistant clothing. Proposed penalties total \$49,884. For more information, see the [news release](#).

FOCUS ON

Five Steps to Hand Protection

Various tasks and activities in the workplace can endanger workers' hands. For example, workers' hands could be cut by sharp materials, injured by hazardous substances or at risk of electrical shocks. If those hazards can't be eliminated, safety regulations may require employers to provide appropriate PPE to protect workers' hands. The types of available hand protection vary from basic leather or cotton work gloves to rubber gloves and metal mesh gloves. To ensure that your workers' hands are adequately protected and that you comply with the hand protection requirements, take these five basic steps.

Step #1: Determine if Hand Protection Is Required

Safety regulations typically require hand protection when workers' hands are at risk of injury or exposed to hazards such as:

- Punctures, cuts, irritations, burns or abrasions;
- Fractures or amputations;
- Contamination or infection;
- Contact with a hazardous, chemical or biological substance;
- Contact with an exposed energized electrical conductor;
- Exposure to work processes that result in extreme temperatures; and
- Injury arising from prolonged exposure to water.

Step #2: Select Appropriate Hand Protection

Many kinds of PPE, such as respiratory, hearing and eye protection, must comply with a designated standard. For example, if a worker may be exposed to electrical hazards, he may be required to use gloves that comply with a standard such as ASTM D120, "Standard Specification for Rubber Insulating Gloves."

As to other types of hazards that could injure a worker's hands, you should select the hand protection that's appropriate for that specific hazard. For example, if the hazard involves contact with hazardous substances, the gloves should be coated to prevent absorption of those substances. If the hazard is exposure to extreme cold, the gloves should keep workers' hands warm. In addition, consulting a voluntary standard such as ANSI/ISEA 105-2016 Hand Protection Classification is a good idea.

In addition to selecting hand protection that's appropriate for the hazard, also ensure that you select gloves that are the appropriate size for the workers who'll be wearing them. If gloves are too big, they won't adequately protect the worker and may get caught in machinery (more on this issue below). And if gloves are too small or are otherwise uncomfortable, workers may not use them. When selecting hand protection for your workers, keep in mind that you

need to balance safety with productivity. That is, gloves should protect workers' hands, while still allowing them to do their jobs efficiently. For example, gloves shouldn't interfere with workers' dexterity or their ability to grip or hold tools and materials.

Step #3: Ensure Use of Hand Protection Doesn't Create a Hazard

In some cases, the use of hand protection may actually create a safety hazard for workers. For example, wearing gloves while using certain equipment could expose workers to the risk of the gloves getting entangled in the machinery and their hands or arms being injured. In such cases, workers should not wear gloves and the employer must implement alternate safety measures to protect workers' hands.

Step #4: Set Hand Protection Rules

You should have safety rules on the use of all PPE, including hand protection. These rules should cover, at a minimum:

- When the use of hand protection is required—and when not to use it. For example, bar workers from wearing gloves with metal parts near electrical equipment or wearing gloves when they could come into contact with a moving part of a machine;
- How to choose appropriate safety gloves, including properly fitting gloves;
- How to properly clean and care for gloves, which is usually specified by the manufacturer or supplier;
- How to inspect gloves before each use for damage that could make them ineffective. For example, rubber or synthetic gloves should be inflated to test for leaks; and
- How to put on and remove gloves to avoid contamination (if appropriate).

In addition to these PPE-related rules, you should also bar workers from wearing rings, which can get caught in machinery and result in various hand injuries, including fractures and amputations.

Step #5: Train Workers

Naturally, you should train workers on all of your PPE rules, including those relating to hand protection. Regularly reinforce such training with toolbox talks and quizzes to ensure that workers understand these rules and know how to apply them on the job when their hands are at risk of injury.

Bottom Line

Thousands of times a year, individuals' hands are injured, disabled or lost because of workplace injury. Failing to ensure that workers wear appropriate hand protection can result in such injuries. So, ensure your safety program's PPE rules comply with the hand protection requirements and adequately protect workers' hands from injury. ❖



PICTURE THIS

Power Tools Aren't Lapdogs

Many workers use power tools, such as saws, on the job. These tools are very useful but also very dangerous. So, workers should take various safety measures when using power tools. For example, the worker in this picture should be:

- Wearing the proper personal protective equipment including, safety glasses to protect his eyes from dust and wood chips kicked up by the saw and hearing protection given the noise from the saw.
- Using a proper platform to cut the wood—not his leg! ❖

SEVEN STATISTICS

Hand and Power Tools

Workers operating hand and power tools face a wide range of potential hazards throughout the course of any given day. Without the proper training and maintenance, they are at risk of injuries resulting from lacerations, flying objects, harmful dusts, electrical accidents and more.

1. Nail guns are powerful, easy to operate, and boost productivity for nailing tasks. They are also responsible for an estimated **37,000** emergency room visits each year - 68% of these involve workers and 32% involve consumers. Severe nail gun injuries have led to construction worker deaths. Fortunately, these injuries can be prevented, and more and more contractors are making changes to improve nail gun safety. Research shows that risk of injury is twice as high using "contact" trigger nail guns compared to "sequential" trigger nail guns.
2. Over **32,000** chainsaw injuries happen each year. A lot of these injuries occur when users fail to wear the correct protective gear. According to Anita Gambill at Stihl, one of the world's leading chain-saw manufacturers, "Chain-saw chaps cost about as much money as one stitch in the emergency room. Unfortunately, if you have an accident with a chain saw, you're never going to need just one stitch." The truth is worse than you think. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average chain-saw injury requires 110 stitches.
3. A recent study by the American Journal of Preventative Medicine found that between 1990 and 2005, ladders sent **2.1 million** people to the hospital. Ninety-seven percent of those accidents happened in "non-occupational settings"--in other words, your backyard. These numbers translate into an average of 140,000 injuries a year, or one every 3 minutes and 45 seconds--that's more than twice as many as a table saw. The study goes on to say that the most common injuries are likely to be fractures to the legs and feet.
4. Circular saws have faster blades than table saws, with an outer edge spinning at about **120 mph**, and they can cause some serious damage if used incorrectly or recklessly. A study in Australia's Hazard Magazine found that of all reported saw injuries, circular saws make up the largest group at 30 percent. Of the recorded injuries, 56 percent involve DIYers, 99 percent of whom are male, with 68 percent of those blokes in the 20-to-39 age range.
5. Table saw accidents account for about **67,000** recorded injuries every year. While lacerations are the most common injury, around 4,000 accidents with table saws involve amputations because of direct contact with the rotating blade. The medical costs for treating table saw injuries have been estimated at more than **\$2.1 BILLION EVERY YEAR**. The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System says, of the 720,000 injuries in Canada associated with woodworking each year, 42 percent happened at the table saw. Five percent of these patients required hospitalization.
6. Every time you start your mower, you are dealing with a dangerous and potentially deadly piece of equipment. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission statistics are shocking: Each year, **800** children are run over by riding mowers or small tractors and more than 600 of those incidents result in amputation; 75 people are killed, and 20,000 injured; one in five deaths involves a child. For children under age 10, major limb loss is most commonly caused by lawn mowers. In Canada, 1161 patients with 1451 injuries were presented between 14 and 16 hospitals across Canada, between 1990 and 2006. Especially shocking is that a total of 48 percent of the patients were 15 years old and younger. This is a high number considering that children should not even be in the yard when it is being mowed.
7. Compared to chain saws, drills seem downright friendly, yet they put **5,800** people a year in the ER. In one particularly horrible incident, a 25-year-old man fell from a ladder while using a drill to install lights for a New Year's Day celebration. The spinning bit entered through his jaw and skull bones and tore up an artery. He died after inhaling blood. ❖

