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## HOUSEKEEPING & HYGIENE

### 10 Things to Include in Your Workplace Housekeeping Policy

**"H**ousekeeping." The word just doesn't work in an industrial setting. To your average worker, "housekeeping" summons up maids and parents scolding kids for leaving their socks on the floor. "Sanitation" and "hygiene" sound weightier but are just as off-putting to workers. But while finding the suitable word to convey may be a challenge, the concept itself is crucial. In addition to being a legal requirement, effective housekeeping in the workplace is imperative to safety, productivity and profitability to the extent it:

#### Minimizes

- Slip, trip and fall hazards
- Risks of struck-by injuries
- Risks of being hit by flying objects or debris
- Fire hazards
- Worker exposure to dusts, vapors, fumes and other airborne hazards

#### Maximizes

- Efficient use of physical work space
- Efficient storage
- Efficient flow of materials & personnel
- Efficient use of tools and machinery
- Ease of cleanup, maintenance and waste disposal
- Quality of environmental conditions

#### Importance of the Policy

Housekeeping isn't just cleanliness and picking up your dirty socks. It's a mind-set as well as a practical strategy that must be implemented on a day-to-day and even hour-to-hour basis. It requires specificity, discipline and attention to detail. If you try and freelance, it'll never work. What you need is a carefully written housekeeping policy.

**Read More on Page 2** ▶

## The 10 Things to Include in Your Housekeeping Policy

It's important to design your housekeeping policy around the unique characteristics of your workplace regarding physical space, operations, materials handled, equipment used, etc. But while the idea of a one-size-fits-all is laughable, there are best practices for designing and deciding what to include in a workplace housekeeping policy. Here are the top 10 elements:

### 1. Statement of Purpose

Start by describing why the policy was created, i.e., to establish clear standards and rules to ensure the workplace is kept in a safe, neat, sanitary and orderly condition at all times.

### 2. Policy Statement

A strong policy statement can help you "sell" the policy by explaining what workers get out of good housekeeping, namely, the chance to do their job safely and efficiently. Conversely, describe the bad things that can happen to workers if housekeeping is poor, namely, increased risk of injury and illness.

### 3. Definition of "Housekeeping"

Keeping in mind the context and negative associations the word may conjure up with workers, you need to specifically define what "housekeeping" is. Make it clear you're talking not just about cleanliness but rather, regular, proactive activities, dedicated to keeping work areas neat, orderly and free of hazards for the purposes of protecting everybody's health and safety.

### 4. Who Your Policy Is Designed to Protect

Make it clear the policy is designed to protect all workers who have a stake in ensuring the workplace is kept clean, neat, orderly and free of hazards, including not just your own company's full- and part-time employees but also:

- Temporary employees placed by an outside agency who work at your site.
- Contract laborers hired to work at your site.
- Volunteers who work at your site for free.
- Workers employed by the company's constructors, contractors, and subcontractors who work at your site.

### 5. Roles & Responsibilities

List the housekeeping-related roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders under your policy, including at a minimum:

## TOOL

Use the Model Housekeeping Checklist on page 6.

- Company owners, officers, directors and other principals who would be considered employers under occupational health and safety laws.
- The EHS officer/manager or other individual(s) in charge of running your health and safety program.
- Supervisors, foremen, lead-hands, etc.
- Workers.

You may also want to extend this part of your policy to include members of the safety committee or health and safety representative and visitors.

### 6. General Housekeeping Standards

Now we come to the heart of the policy, the actual housekeeping standards you expect to be maintained in the workplace. Get down to the nitty-gritty details including:

- Vacuuming, cleaning and removal of dirt and debris from floors, working surfaces, stairways, passages, platforms, entrances and exits.
- Keeping the above areas dry, clean and free of clutter, obstructions and tripping hazards.
- Cleaning and maintenance of eating and break areas.
- Scheduling when and how often different work areas are checked and by whom.
- Stacking, piling, shelving, and storage of different materials.
- Checking mats, pads, rugs, and other items on the floor for hazardous ripples, curling, and other tripping hazards.
- Keeping fire exits, fire alarms, pull stations, hose cabinets and fire extinguishers free of obstructions and readily accessible – ALWAYS.
- Installing and maintaining indoor and outdoor lighting.
- Keeping outdoor areas, entries and exits, dry and free of snow and ice accumulations.
- Establishing spill control and cleanup procedures and waste disposal measures.

## ABOUT US

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- Creating protocols, inspection checklists, and timing for the inspection, maintenance, and servicing of tools and equipment.
- Establishing general inspection procedures and schedules for all work areas.
- Implementing process for repairs, equipment removals, and other corrective actions.

### 7. Indoor Smoking Rules

While you can also include it as a separate policy, we incorporate indoor smoking rules into our housekeeping policy. Although the specific rules must track the actual legislation of your local, state and federal laws, in most cases it will be appropriate—if not outright mandatory—to ban tobacco use, including cannabis smoking and vaping, in:

- Enclosed spaces in which workers perform their employment duties.
- Eating areas, washrooms and restrooms.
- Adjacent corridors, lobbies, stairwells, elevators, escalators or other common areas frequented by workers and visitors.
- Company vehicles and other vehicles used by workers.

The policy should also require the posting of No Smoking signs and removal of ashtrays and other smoking receptacles in areas where smoking is banned.

### 8. Requirements for Contractors & Subcontractors

Your policy should include provisions requiring contractors and subcontractors hired at your site to comply with your housekeeping requirements. How you do that depends on the contractor's status under your applicable safety and health laws:

- Ordinary contractors and subcontractors hired to work at your site and thus presumably subject to your control, should be required to agree to follow your housekeeping policy and ensure their workers do likewise.
- Constructors (aka prime or controlling contractors) hired to control a project at your work site and assume primary responsibility for ensuring that work complies with safety and health requirements should be required to either:
  - Directly follow your housekeeping policy; or
  - Adopt and implement their own housekeeping policy that complies with safety and health rules and provides at least equivalent protection to workers as your policy does.

### 9. Training

State you will provide education and training to all your workers affected by this policy to ensure they understand and are qualified to carry out their responsibilities under the policy.

### 10. Monitoring

Finally, indicate you will evaluate your housekeeping practices on a pre-established and regular basis and during regular job observations. In addition, you should review the policy at least once a year and on an immediate basis in response to:

- Significant changes in work circumstances or conditions.
- And/or incidents and other red flags suggesting the policy isn't working and needs to be reviewed.

You may have to perform such a review in consultation with your safety committee and/or health and safety representatives, depending on health and safety regulations. ❖

## Injury and Illness Reporting and Posting: **Have you Posted Your Form 300A Yet?**

If you haven't already done so, here's a mid-month reminder!

Employers must prominently display [2017 summary of work-related injuries and illnesses](#) - Form 300A - in their workplaces from Feb. through April.

### Recordkeeping Requirements

Many employers with more than 10 employees are required to keep a record of serious work-related injuries and illnesses. ([Certain low-risk industries are exempted.](#)) Minor injuries requiring first aid only do not need to be recorded.

- [How does OSHA define a recordable injury or illness?](#)
- [How does OSHA define first aid?](#)

This information helps employers, workers

and OSHA evaluate the safety of a workplace, understand industry hazards, and implement worker protections to reduce and eliminate hazards -preventing future workplace injuries and illnesses.

### Maintaining and Posting Records

The records must be maintained at the worksite for at least five years. Each February through April, employers must post a summary of the injuries and illnesses recorded the previous year. Also, if requested, copies of the records must be provided to current and former employees, or their representatives.

- [Get recordkeeping forms 300, 300A, 301, and additional instructions.](#)
- [Read the full OSHA Recordkeeping regulation \(29 CFR 1904\).](#)

### Updated Electronic Submission of Records

The Injury Tracking Application (ITA) is accessible from the [ITA launch page](#), where you can provide the Agency your 2017 OSHA Form 300A information. The date by which **certain** employers are required to submit to OSHA the information from their completed 2017 Form 300A is July 1, 2018.

- [Learn about OSHA's rule on submitting injury and illness records electronically.](#)

### Severe Injury Reporting

Employers must report any worker fatality within 8 hours and any amputation, loss of an eye, or hospitalization of a worker within 24 hours.

- [Learn details and how to report online or by phone.](#)



## How to Safely Use Abrasive Wheel Grinders

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

The abrasive wheel grinder is a common - and dangerous - piece of machinery. When working with grinders and other power tools, you must think about safety all the time to prevent being cut, drilled, sliced, diced or crushed.

### WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Revolving at 10,000 surface feet per minute (sometimes more), grinders are a threat to hands and fingers. But that's not all. Flying debris, dust and fumes, and the noise of the machine itself endanger your eyes, ears and respiratory system.

Workers have been killed when using improper grinding discs. They can fracture, sending fragments into nearby workers. Other causes of disc fracturing include:

- using too much pressure on the tool;
- using a cracked or chipped wheel; and
- using a machine with an operating speed faster than the RPM rating of the disc or wheel.

Consider the following incident. An employee was grinding on a pipe stand with a hand grinder. As the employee was grinding the pipe stand; the grinding wheel exploded and hit the face shield, causing damage to the face shield and hitting the employee in the right eye and face.

The incident investigation revealed:

- The grinding wheel that was being used was not the correct size for the job.
- The never-before-used wheel was not tap or ring tested and had a crack from shipment.
- The grinder did not have the required guards in place.

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

When operating grinders, always use the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE), including safety glasses, gloves, a dust mask and appropriate hearing protection. Also, avoid wearing loose clothing that could get caught in the machinery.

Besides PPE, proper guarding is an important safety feature for those working with grinders.

On stationary grinders, wheels should be guarded with a heavy metal enclosure. There should also be an adjustable guard over the front of the wheel for protection as the wheel diameter gets smaller. Work rests to support the pieces you are working on should be installed on the front lip of the enclosure, within 1/8 inch of the grinder.

Portable grinders should have guards on the end that overlap the disc to prevent kick-back. They should also have an adjustable hand rest to maneuver and stabilize the grinder. When working with portable grinders, remember that air operated grinders run at a higher speed, and electrical grinders have electrical hazards to consider.

Other tips to remember and follow:

1. Check that your work area is clean, dry and well lit.
2. Inspect the equipment.
  - Is the grinder steady or mounted securely?
  - Is the wheel the correct size for the machine's size and speed?
  - Is the wheel evenly worn?
3. Test the wheel by tapping it with a light non-metallic tool.
  - A clear ring means the wheel should be fine.
  - A thud means the wheel may be cracked and shouldn't be used.
4. Ensure all guards and rests are in place and the electrical motor cover is secure.
5. Check the power source is properly grounded and that the cord and connections are not damaged.
6. Ensure dry grinding operations are connected to an exhaust system.
7. Next, check your posture. Make sure you can stand and work in a balanced position and have firm control of the tool without overreaching.
8. Finally, stand off to the side and test the wheel to make sure that it is operating correctly.

### FINAL WORD

*Grinding can be a dangerous task. Protect yourself by wearing the proper PPE, using machine guarding and following a safety checklist. ❖*

**Meeting material to go:** Safety meeting materials such as presentation tips, PowerPoint presentations, quiz answers and more are downloadable at: [www.SafetySmart.com](http://www.SafetySmart.com)

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Abrasive wheel grinders revolve at what speed?
  - a. 1,000 surface feet per hour
  - b. 1 surface foot per second
  - c. 10,000 surface feet per minute
2. Which of the following are safety hazards associated with grinders?
  - a. Flying debris
  - b. Dust and fumes
  - c. Machine noise
  - d. All the above
3. Stationary grinders should have an adjustable guard to provide protection as the wheel diameter gets smaller.
 

True  False
4. On a stationary grinder, how close to the grinder should a work rest be?
  - a. Within 3 inches
  - b. Within 1/8 inch
  - c. Within 1/2 inch

### What Would You Do?

You ring tested a grinding wheel and it made a dull thudding sound. You used this same wheel and grinder yesterday without any issues. What would you do?

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**TOOL BOX**

**Model Housekeeping Checklist**

One of the simplest ways to protect workers from getting hurt on the job is with good housekeeping practices. For example, keeping floors clean and free of clutter will help reduce the likelihood of slips, trips, and falls. Adapt this checklist and use it to inspect your workplace and evaluate the adequacy of your housekeeping efforts.

Inspection date: \_\_\_\_\_ Inspected by: \_\_\_\_\_

| TOPIC   | YES | NO | COMMENTS |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| Floors clean and free of water, mud, ice, grease, oil, waste and clutter.   |     |    |          |
| Leaks and spills cleaned up promptly.   |     |    |          |
| Traffic areas clear and free of obstacles such as cords, air hoses or boxes.  |     |    |          |
| Exits and stairs clearly marked.  |     |    |          |
| Garbage cans used and emptied regularly.  |     |    |          |
| Unused materials disposed of or stored safely (not allowed to accumulate in out-of-the-way places).   |     |    |          |
| Stored materials safely stacked, correctly labeled and in proper order.   |     |    |          |
| Stairways and doorways kept clear and well-lighted.   |     |    |          |
| Oily rags stowed in approved covered metal cans.  |     |    |          |
| Hazardous materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kept in clearly and correctly labeled authorized containers.</li> <li>▪ Stored away from sources of ignition and other hazards.</li> </ul> |     |    |          |
| Flammable materials stored away from sources of ignition.   |     |    |          |
| Machines and tools kept clean, free of oil and dust and properly maintained.  |     |    |          |
| Tools cleaned and put away right after use.   |     |    |          |
| Work stations left clean at the end of each shift.  |     |    |          |
| Equipment and other surfaces checked for jagged edges, rough surfaces, dangerous nails and hooks.   |     |    |          |
| Chairs and stools correctly placed to prevent tripping accidents.   |     |    |          |
| Chairs in good repair.  |     |    |          |
| Drawers and cabinet doors kept closed to prevent both tipping and tripping accidents.   |     |    |          |
| Smoking done only in designated areas and ashtrays used.  |     |    |          |
| Lunch areas clean and lunch scraps disposed of properly.  |     |    |          |
| Washrooms clean and dry.  |     |    |          |

## CONTRACTOR'S CORNER

# Don't Contract Out Safety

**N**ot everyone does the same job the same way. You may have a completely different approach to handling a problem than a colleague may have. But you both should respect the same general workplace safety rules. Without a consensus, working with one another can cause chaos and create hazards.

The same is true when working with different contractors. In this article we are going to look at different contractors' approaches to safety and how to ensure everyone is following the same safety rules.

### What Can Go Wrong

There have been situations where one company's workers observed a contractor engaging in unsafe acts. Their work may have been excellent, but their actions caused safety concerns. They put everyone around them in danger. Let's look at a few examples of contractors following safety rules—or not, as the case may be:

- Kim, wearing PPE, wired an electrical panel for a contractor at a housing construction site. She did a couple of things differently but still managed to complete the job safely.
- As Terry prepped his welding equipment he didn't notice Jerome moving flammable materials nearby.
- Brian finished working on the roof of a new office complex. He took the unsafe shortcut of not using fall protection equipment because he was only going to be on the roof for a few minutes.

Everyone in these scenarios did their jobs, but only one of them kept safety in mind when doing the work. Terry and Brian just got lucky. This time.

While you can't expect every contractor to think and work the same way, *every contractor* needs to play by the same safety rules. When they don't, the consequences can range from injuries and death, property and equipment damage, lawsuits, fines, and even jail time.

### Protecting Your Employees—and Everyone Else

Working with contractors from other companies means sharing a commitment to safety and follow the same safety rules. Do the following so you can be on the same page about safety:

- Set and [communicate expectations before work begins](#). Doing so reduces confusion and potential safety problems later.
- Set up regular meetings to talk to one another about work tasks and the hazards surrounding each activity.

- Establish a process to identify hazards and how they should be reported.
  - Work together to come up with a safe solution and ensure corrective actions are taken and communicated with crews from each affected company.
  - Watch over one another and point out safety issues as they arise.
- Remind your crews - when one worker takes a risk with his or her safety, it affects everyone on the job. They have two options if they observe an unsafe act or condition:
  1. Talk to the worker responsible.
  2. Report it to their (own) supervisor.

### Conclusion

Everyone on the worksite should commit to safety and avoid hazards. Use these and other suggestions to stay safe when working with contractors. ❖

### Training Break

You can use one or all the ideas below to initiate short but meaningful, discussion, training, and learning among your crews.

1. Ask your employees to consider the following scenario and discuss what they would do.
  - a. Samson, a contractor, is working with you to complete a large housing project.
  - b. He consistently takes procedural shortcuts and it's only a matter of time before something goes wrong.
  - c. What are three different ways you can ensure that everyone on site, including Samson, is on the same page about safety?
2. Review and discuss your company's policies about working with contractors and subcontractors and allow time reviewing relevant contractor incidents and examples, and for Q&A to help everyone understand the policies.
3. Ask participants to write down how to complete a job task and identify safety concerns or hazards.
  - a. Compare. Discuss.
  - b. Emphasize that doing a job safely is the most important part.

## SPOT THE SAFETY VIOLATION

# Circular Saw Classic

**Y**ou may have seen this classic “what was he thinking?” image before, and if you’re at all like me, your first inclination was to focus on what the worker was doing unsafely or just plain wrong.

But when this image came across my desk again recently, I had another thought. *What safety, managerial, or procedural shortcomings lead this guy to think that his best option for a work platform was his own leg?*

While you should certainly use this image as a training tool for your crew, share it with other supervisors, leads, and others overseeing workers and their safety. Use it to start up a conversation about possible shortcomings in safety policies, managerial processes and communication, and procedural shortcomings the employee in this picture, and your employees face while they are trying to get the job done.

Back to the circular saw in the image...

Warn your workers not to use portable circular saws, or any other portable powered cutting tool for that matter, unless they:

- Wear safety glasses to protect their eyes from dust and wood chips—those eyeglasses aren’t doing the worker any good dangling from his shirt.
- Use hearing and head protection; and
- Use a proper platform to cut the object—legs don’t count as a proper platform!

### 3 Reasons to Pay Attention

Let your workers know what’s at stake by making the following three short but powerful points:

1. Each year, over 10,000 workers suffer serious circular saw injuries.
2. Almost all these injuries are preventable.
3. The one thing that would have prevented the most injuries: using the saw properly.

### 3 Hazards to Watch Out For

Having captured the audience’s attention, point out the common hazards posed by operating a handheld circular saw and the steps they can take to protect themselves:

#### 1. Point of Operation Hazards

You can get hurt if your hands slip or you get too close to the saw during cutting. *Prevention strategy:* Keep your hands out of the line of the cut.

#### 2. Flying Particles

Wood chips, splinters, and broken saw teeth may be thrown off by the blade’s cutting action. *Prevention strategy:* Use proper eye and face protection.



#### 3. Kickback

When the blade catches the stock, it may be thrown back toward the operator. *Prevention strategy:* Keep the blade sharp, use the saw at the speed the manufacturer recommends and properly support the stock being cut—remember, using your legs is not a proper means of support! ❖