

## **HOUSEKEEPING**

**Housekeeping** includes the absence of clutter and debris in the working area, passageways, and aisles as well as maintaining painted surfaces in a clean condition, with frequent removal of dust from lighting fixtures, and in general making the plant "a better place to work." To maintain good housekeeping, adequate storage space must be provided, warning signs must be properly placed and visible, and provisions for prompt cleanup of spills must be provided.

### **Why Is Good Housekeeping Important?**

A clean and non-cluttered work area is essential in controlling exposure to hazardous chemicals and maintaining a safe work environment. Spilled chemical products allowed to accumulate on working surfaces or floor can result in inhalation hazards, exposure via skin contact, and slipping hazards.

Water pooling in areas (particularly around air handling units) could lead to microorganism (e.g., bacteria) growth which could cause disease/ illness. Additionally, water around equipment and in passageways presents slipping and electrical hazards.

Access to emergency eyewash and safety shower facilities must not be obstructed. Nobody can predict when an incident may occur where an eyewash or shower is needed. In many cases, seconds may make the difference between a complete recovery or not.

Clear aisles (particularly at intersections) prevents pedestrians from stepping in front of a moving vehicle and allows the vehicle driver to see pedestrians.

By having a clean and clutter-free environment, the equipment operator can better observe the operation of his/ her equipment. Poor visibility of equipment performance is not only a safety hazard, but is also a product quality concern.

It helps prevent fire hazards. Anything which can support a flame increases the potential for fire and spread of fire if a source of ignition is introduced. Therefore, any materials which can support a flame must be minimized and properly stored.

It permits quick egress from an area or building in the event of an emergency evacuation. In the unlikely event of explosion or fire, quick and orderly egress from the area (or building) is essential. This can occur in a much more organized fashion if aisles and passageways are clear.

Keeping light fixtures clean and obstacles away from light sources allows for good visibility and clarity while performing job duties. This is important for safe operation of the equipment or tools being used as well for producing quality product.

### **Who Is Affected?**

Everyone is affected by housekeeping. That is, everyone must contribute to maintaining the working environment, and everyone benefits from an environment which practices good housekeeping. A work area where good housekeeping is practiced is a more enjoyable place to work.

### **How Can You Help Maintain Good Housekeeping?**

Everyone can help maintain good housekeeping. In fact, the most effective program is the one where everyone shares the responsibilities. This is an on-going process. Some of the ways each of us can contribute to maintaining good housekeeping are:

- Use trash cans to dispose of (non-chemical) waste.
- Advise your supervisor (or spill control team, if applicable) immediately in the event of a chemical spill (liquid or other form).
- Advise your supervisor or maintenance department of any water leaks and have caution stands positioned around any water hazards on the floor which could cause slipping.
- Minimize the quantity of materials and supplies in the immediate work area and properly store those materials not immediately needed.
- Keep electrical cords out of passageways, thus preventing tripping and electrical hazards.
- Report visibility problems (due to obstructions, dust on lights, etc.) to your supervisor to arrange for abatement.