

Safe Housekeeping

If you want to learn about attitudes toward safety, just take a look at housekeeping habits. Good housekeeping is really one of the most important aspects of safety. Good housekeeping is not just something for the housekeeping staff—good housekeeping should be practiced by everyone.

The University could spend a lot of money to improve the quality and safety of the work environment, but the environment would still be unsafe if you and your co-workers did not practice good housekeeping. Safety entails everyone working as a team to maintain good housekeeping standards. Make sure you follow the rules to prevent accidents by practicing good housekeeping.

- Make sure all containers are labeled; the labels should be legible not blurred by liquids that have run down the outside of the containers.
- Do not store supplies where they may be mistaken for something else. For example, it is not a good idea to store caustic chemicals with cleaning powders and liquids.
- Be familiar with special chemicals, gases and liquids that are used in your work area, and know the ones that can and cannot be stored together. Some substances, like oxygen and fuel gases, have the potential for disaster when stored in close proximity.
- Dispose of hazardous substances—like flammable liquids and chemical reagents—by the safe method prescribed. Contact I EH&S for pick up and disposal of all hazardous materials.
- Clean up your work area immediately after completing each task; never leave an area cluttered with tools or supplies that could present tripping hazards.
- Clean up spilled liquids right away; they can cause slips and falls.
- Pick up broken glass immediately with a broom and dustpan, never with your hands.
- Do not allow debris, such as cleaning rags and paper to accumulate anywhere, because this creates a serious fire hazard.
- Respect “Wet Floor” signs. They are used for your protection.

Good housekeeping is one of the most important aspects of any fire safety plan. Accumulated debris can cause fires, and clutter slows movement of personnel and equipment during fires. Anyone who wants to prevent fires should begin with good housekeeping.

In addition to all the safety benefits, it contributes, good housekeeping results in a more pleasant working environment. Almost everyone prefers cleanliness and neatness to filth and clutter.

Because good housekeeping is important to your safety as well as the safety of your co-workers, concentrate on keeping your work area clean. Make good housekeeping and daily routine.