

**LOSS CONTROL DATA GUIDE**

## Housekeeping

More than 20% of all fire losses and a large number of work injuries result directly or indirectly from poor housekeeping. Although not considered a high priority by some, improved housekeeping is a time tested method of increasing productivity and reducing cost.

### Management actions

Management action to assign accountability for housekeeping and to direct change in the “status quo” of poor housekeeping will have positive results. Management should take the following actions:

- 1. Communicate the need for improved housekeeping**  
Recognition of the need will do nothing to improve conditions unless positive corrective action is taken.
- 2. Improve the workplace environment**  
By a combination of Administrative Action and Engineering Changes, factors such as lighting, noise, dust, fume, vapor, and ventilation should be evaluated and improved. Well lighted and brightly painted areas highlight spills and trash accumulations. Repair of leak, noise, or dust producing equipment eliminates housekeeping problems at the source in a more cost effective manner than repeated cleanup.
- 3. Safe arrangement and workflow**  
Improve use of floorspace. Provide well marked aisles which are free from obstruction. Consider the use of racks, bins, or more frequent waste removal. (Rack and piled storage over 12 feet high may require additional automatic sprinkler protection.) Properly arranged equipment and an orderly workflow of processes and operations to control excessive back up of materials will improve production and quality, as well as to provide a safer workplace.
- 4. Provide the necessary tools and equipment**  
Proper containers, bins, brooms, mops, etc., should be provided.

### Checklist of specific housekeeping concerns

- Smoking - Should be controlled where required. See Loss Control Data Guide F.13572 for details.
- Combustible materials - All combustible raw and waste materials should be stored in covered metal containers.
- Receptacles - For combustible trash, should be noncombustible with lids or fitted “self extinguishing” covers.
- Floors - Should be clean and dry. Noncombustible mineral absorbent should be used to remove oil spills. Avoid flammable floor cleaners. Improve slippery floors with treatments or modifications to reduce slip and fall injuries.
- Spills - Should be removed promptly. Exclude untrained persons from hazardous spill areas. Consider process changes to prevent future spills.
- Dust and lint - Reduce the potential for dust explosion and lint fires. All accumulations of dust and lint should be removed. Consider process changes to eliminate the cause.
- Kitchen hoods and ducts - Should be cleaned and maintained to prevent fire. See Loss Control Data Guide F.13344 for details.
- Idle wood pallets - Should be stored outside of buildings, and located at least 50 feet from the buildings.
- Garbage dumpsters - Should be kept away from buildings and air intakes. They should be secure to prevent rolling.
- Vegetation - Outdoor grasses and weeds should be cut or removed to prevent fire spread.
- Birds, pests, vermin - Entry of unwanted animals into buildings or equipment should be prevented to control fire, electrical damage, and health concerns.

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