



How does this affect your company?

As with any company, it is the use of management programmes that drives the business and defines its success. Proper housekeeping standards are vital to loss prevention.

Poor housekeeping in most cases is very visual and is blamed on poor processes, but is often the thoughtlessness or complacency of those responsible for the areas. There are many factors that could

be classed as poor housekeeping, but it is often as simple as: accumulation of rubbish, machining swarf, leaks from dispensers or machines, obsolete parts or stock.

Whatever the issue, it is essential that the area is clean, organised and arranged in a manner that does not hamper the activities undertaken. This will help to ensure the continuing support of all workers in the area.

There are other benefits to maintaining these standards as people will work harder and more accurately in a clean, well organised environment. These standards should also help to prevent fires occurring, limit the growth of fires and improve the effectiveness of the emergency response when trying to deal with a small fire as fire extinguishers will be readily accessible, easy to reach and visible.

Why does this affect your company?

Poor housekeeping standards are known to increase the potential for a loss from fire. It is essential that management actively demonstrates support of proper housekeeping standards. This can be best achieved through a written programme with agreed standards for keeping areas and machinery clean and orderly. For it to work successfully everyone involved must be aware of what is expected of them on a day to day basis and management should monitor the situation to ensure standards remain high. The implementation of a checklist for responsible employees to monitor the areas on a continuous and regular basis should be considered.

The main features required for an effective housekeeping standards:

- Define roles and responsibilities
- All employees should be vigilant and maintain the housekeeping standards
- Define the level of cleanliness
- Monitor areas on a regular and random basis
- Reward consistently good housekeeping practices
- Provide adequate and proper cleaning equipment and materials

The most important factor is that the standards should become part of the company's procedures.



What could happen to your company if you don't take these steps?

Good housekeeping practices don't just happen and it is essential that the whole company is committed to the philosophy. There is no doubt that initially there is a cost to good quality housekeeping standards, but in the long-term there should be benefits from improved process flow, greater output and better communication. The ultimate benefit is that if an incident occurs in the workplace, the emergency response is not hampered by accumulated rubbish, obsolete equipment or blocked aisles. This will help to ensure that a small incident stays small.

For further information on housekeeping please contact your local Tokio Marine Kiln office or contact:

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What should your company do/have?

Housekeeping leaders

Set up a group which has a direct line to the site management. This team should define the levels of cleanliness and cascade this information across the company to ensure that all people know their roles, responsibilities and the standards that must be maintained.

Roles and responsibilities

The housekeeping leaders should carefully determine the correct number of people required to maintain the level of cleanliness.

Culture of cleanliness

Possibly the most difficult thing to establish in any company is a culture of cleanliness, but once in place this will pay significant dividends.

Reward

Maintaining a culture of cleanliness is challenging at all levels of a company and consistent good housekeeping practices should be acknowledged and rewarded.

Be vigilant

Emphasise the housekeeping message at all times by encouraging staff to remain vigilant and observe the housekeeping standards.

Changes

Review on a regular basis any changes in the facility or process that might affect the housekeeping and agree acceptable levels of cleanliness.

Poor housekeeping

Do not accept poor housekeeping under any circumstance.

Monitor

Both the housekeeping leaders and senior management should monitor all the areas of the business on a regular basis.

References

- Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Factories and Warehouses (HM Government 2006)