Most people don’t realize it, but according to OSHA, one of the main reasons accidents happen on the job is because of workplace housekeeping. Think about the people who had or perhaps caused an accident. What if by simply spending five minutes picking up junk and litter, or putting away tools not being used, you might prevent a slip, trip, or fall? The following safety talk focuses on the simple things we can do to maintain good housekeeping.

Sometimes it is the smallest things that cause the worst accidents. Follow the steps below and you will be helping us make our Colby safer for everyone:

• Keep walkways, aisles, and stairs free of tools, materials or other “stuff” that may be a tripping hazard.
• Clean up or block off areas where there are spills on floors, entryways, storage areas, loading areas, and anywhere else someone may pass by. If you are not sure what the spill is and you are concerned the spill may be hazardous, block off the area and contact your supervisor.
• Clean up after yourself. Pick up trash and debris and dispose of it properly and keep your work area clean throughout the day, minimizing the time needed to clean a “larger mess” at the end of the day.
• Repair or report floor problems, such as cracks, missing tiles, etc.
• If you are in the process of cleaning an area and the ground is wet or you have electrical cords or air hoses running across the floor, block off the area you are cleaning so nobody trips.
• Always put trash in its proper disposal container.
• Keep cords, power cables, and air hoses out of walkways.
• Keep desk and file drawers closed.
• Remember housekeeping is everyone’s responsibility!
We have already discussed that injuries are a major side effects of poor housekeeping. The list below includes some additional negative consequences due to poor housekeeping.

- Injuries from using improper tools because the correct tool can't be found.
- Lowered production because of the time spent maneuvering over and around someone else's mess, and time spent looking for proper tools and materials.
- Time spent investigating and reporting accidents that could have been avoided.
- Fires due to improper storage and disposal of flammable or combustible materials and wastes.
- Substandard quality of finished products because of production schedule delays, damaged or defective finishes, ill-equipped employees, etc.
- Reduces overall employee morale.
- "Wall-to-wall" OSHA inspections due to the poor "first impression" of the compliance officer.

**BY THE NUMBERS:**

- **66%** of all occupation injuries involve housekeeping in some way
- **#1** cause of trips, slips and falls inside
- **$7000** starting fine from OSHA for poor housekeeping
### Review / Discussion Questions:

1. Is proper housekeeping an ongoing effort on your crew? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree that poor housekeeping affects overall employee morale? Why or why not?
3. When is poor housekeeping an unsafe condition and when is it an unsafe act?

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*Questions, concerns or comments contact the EHS Director at extension 5504.*