



Safety Topic

February, 2002

Topic: HOUSEKEEPING

INTRODUCTION: Though not usually the direct cause of major accidents, poor housekeeping is a major contributor to low morale and sloppy work in general. Government inspectors view housekeeping as a reflection on overall business activities, especially involving compliance issues.

GOAL: To impress upon employees that good housekeeping is indicative of their attitude toward safety.

MEETING PREPARATION: Review your past accident records (worker's comp., OSHA "200" logs", etc.) to determine whether any employees or visitors have been injured as a result of slips, falls, etc. Has any accident been attributed to a housekeeping issue, such as improperly stacked inventory, wet floors, or poor lighting? Do your records indicate any correlation between accidents and work areas (or particular employees) that exhibit poor housekeeping practices? Amend the attached checklist as necessary and make copies for review at your meeting. Be prepared to review the hazards associated with the listed items.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER: OSHA considers contributing factors as they relate to the probability that a serious accident can occur. For example, if an employee trips, one would not normally expect serious injury. However, if tripping hazards (e.g., welding cable) or slipping hazards (e.g., standing water) are located adjacent to a loading dock, it is reasonable to anticipate that a fall may result in a broken bone; therefore, a "housekeeping" issue can quickly develop into a "serious violation."

FOLLOW-UP: Get rid of rubbish that has collected; make sure proper containers are provided; see that flammables are properly stored; make sure that exits are not blocked; if necessary, mark aisles and passageways; provide adequate lighting, etc.

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