

Housekeeping Requirements under the OHS Laws



Keeping the workplace clean and neat isn't just about appearances. Poor housekeeping practices can create safety hazards. For example, floors covered in dirt, grime, grease and other substances can cause slips-and-falls. And a build up of dust can lead to fires and explosions. (For more on the importance of good housekeeping, read this article by OHS consultant Barbara Semeniuk.) That's why the OHS laws include housekeeping requirements. This chart shows the general housekeeping requirements under the OHS law of each jurisdiction. Note that the chart doesn't cover housekeeping requirements for specific types of workplaces, such as offices or construction sites, or types of buildings, such as temporary structures.

Use this model housekeeping checklist to inspect your workplace and evaluate the adequacy of your housekeeping efforts. At SafetyPoster.com, you can buy posters promoting good housekeeping practices.

GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING REQUIREMENTS

FED *Canada OHS Regs.:*

- 1) Every exterior stairway, walkway, ramp and passageway that may be used by workers must be kept free of accumulations of ice and snow or other slipping or tripping hazards [Sec. 2.14(1)].
- 2) All dust, dirt, waste and scrap material in every workplace in a building must be removed as often as is necessary to protect workers' health and safety and shall be disposed of in a manner that doesn't endanger workers' health and safety [Sec. 2.14(2)].
- 3) Every travelled surface in a workplace must be:
 - a) slip resistant; and
 - b) kept free of splinters, holes, loose boards and tiles and similar defects [Sec. 2.14(3)].
- 2) Where a floor in a workplace is normally wet and workers in the workplace don't use non-slip waterproof footwear, the floor must be covered with a dry false floor or platform or treated with a non-slip material or substance [Sec. 2.15].

AB *OHS Code 2009:*

An employer must ensure that a worksite is kept clean and free from materials or equipment that could cause workers to slip or trip [Sec. 185].

BC *OHS Regs.:*

- 1) Floors, platforms, ramps, stairs and walkways available for use by workers must be maintained in a state of good repair and kept free of slipping and tripping hazards [Sec. 4.39(1)].
- 2) If a work process results in a liquid accumulating on the floor or grade surface in a work area and the liquid creates a slipping or other hazard, floor drains or other suitable means must be used to control the hazard [Sec. 4.40].
- 3) Refuse, spills and waste material must not be allowed to accumulate so as to constitute a hazard [Sec. 4.41].

MB *Workplace Safety & Health Reg.:*

- 1) An employer must ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, a workplace is:
 - a) kept in a clean and sanitary state; and
 - b) kept free from any condition that may create a risk to a worker's safety or health [Sec. 2.14].
- 2) An employer must ensure that all work areas are, so far as is reasonably practicable, kept clear of snow and ice accumulations [Sec. 2.17(a)].
- 3) An employer must ensure that floors, platforms, walkways, ramps and stairs available for use by a worker are maintained in a state of good repair and kept free of slipping and tripping hazards [Sec. 4.5(1)].

NB *OHS Regs.:*

- 1) An employer must ensure that a place of employment is kept in a clean and sanitary condition and in a good state of repair so as not to affect adversely the health and safety of a worker [Sec. 15].
- 2) An employer must ensure that containers used for refuse are emptied at frequent intervals and constructed to withstand the intended use [Sec. 17].
- 3) An employer and a contractor must each keep outdoor passageways from becoming slippery by removing ice or snow and using materials such as ashes, sand or salt where necessary [Sec. 102(8)].

NL *OHS Regs. 2012:*

- 1) Where the regular work process results in liquid spilling on to the floor or work areas and where this spillage could introduce a slipping or other hazard, floor drains must be installed or other suitable means used or adopted to eliminate this hazard [Sec. 34(1)].
- 2) Where wet processes are used, an employer or contractor must ensure that reasonable drainage is maintained and that false floors, platforms, mats or other dry standing places are provided and kept clean [Sec. 34(3)].
- 3) An employer must ensure that the workplace is sanitary and kept as clean as is reasonably practicable and that:
 - a) accumulated dirt and refuse is removed daily by a suitable method from floors, working surfaces, stairways and passages;
 - b) floors are cleaned at least once a week by washing, vacuum cleaning or other effective and suitable means;
 - c) interior walls and partitions, ceilings, passages and staircases are kept in a reasonable state of repair and suitably finished and maintained; and
 - d) floors, platforms, stairs and walkways used by workers are kept in a state of good repair and free of hazards [Sec. 67].

NT/ *General Safety Regs.:*

- NU**
- 1) A floor, platform, stair and walkway used by workers must be maintained in a state of good repair and kept free of hazards [Sec. 23].
 - 2) Where work processes result in the spillage of liquids on the floor of a work area and where the spillage could create a slipping or other hazard, floor drains must be installed or other suitable means must be adopted to control the hazard [Sec. 24].
 - 3) No person may allow refuse or waste material to accumulate so as to constitute a hazard [Sec. 25].

NS *Occupational Safety General Regs.:*

- 1) An employer must ensure that waste material and debris are removed from a workplace to a suitable disposal area on a regular basis, so as to prevent a hazard [Sec. 24].
- 2) An employer must ensure that a floor, stairway, passageway or similar walking surface is designed, constructed and maintained so as not to create a hazard to a person in the workplace [Sec. 139(1)].
- 3) Where a floor, stairway, passageway or similar walking surface at or near a workplace becomes slippery as a result of weather or climatic conditions, an employer must ensure that the floor, stairway, passageway or similar walking surface is kept free from falling or slipping hazards by removing ice, snow or water, to the extent reasonably practicable, and using materials such as ashes, sand, salt, or other measures where appropriate to prevent slipping or falling [Sec. 139(3)].

ON *Industrial Establishments Reg.:*

- 1) A floor or other surface used by any worker must:
 - a) be kept free of:
 - i) obstructions;
 - ii) hazards; and
 - iii) accumulations of refuse, snow or ice; and
 - b) not have any finish or protective material used on it that is likely to make the surface slippery [Sec. 11].
- 2) Removal of material must be done in such a way as not to cause a hazard [Sec. 126].

PE *OHS Regs. :*

- 1) In every workplace, the employer must ensure that:
- a) all personal service rooms such as locker rooms, lunch rooms, canteens, wash rooms and rest rooms are:
 - i) kept free of insects or vermin of any kind;
 - ii) maintained in a bright, clean and sanitary condition at all times; and
 - iii) adequately ventilated [Sec. 5.1(a)];
 - b) surfaces of walls and ceilings, including windows and skylights, are kept clean and in a good state of repair [Sec. 5.1(b)];
 - c) floors are even and free from anything that may create a stumbling hazard [Sec. 5.1(f)];
 - d) floors are kept dry and in a non-slippery condition except in areas where floors remain wet because of the work process [Sec. 5.1(g)];
 - e) if gasoline, oil or grease is spilled on floors so as to constitute a slipping or fire hazard, the area affected is cleaned up immediately [Sec. 5.1(i)];
 - f) combustible materials, such as shavings, waste, oily rags, etc., aren't allowed to accumulate on floors, benches or in places where they would constitute a fire hazard [Sec. 5.1(j)];
 - g) flammable rubbish, weeds and grass aren't allowed to accumulate in yards around buildings or around flammable material storage [Sec. 5.1(k)];
 - h) suitable receptacles of substantial construction which don't leak are provided for the disposal of rubbish [Sec. 5.1(m)];
 - i) waste material and debris are removed daily, or more often if necessary, from the building or structure to a suitable disposal area to prevent a hazardous condition [Sec. 5.1 (n)];
 - j) work areas are cleaned as often as necessary considering the nature of work carried on [Sec. 5.1(p)];
 - k) where cleaning must be done during working hours i.e. sweeping, every effort is made to prevent dust [Sec. 5.1(q)];
 - l) scrap materials, parts, etc., are properly disposed of when a job is completed [Sec. 5.1(r)]; and
 - m) every scaffold, runway, stairway, passageway and ramp is:
 - i) kept clear of obstructions at all times;
 - ii) kept clear of ice, snow or other slippery materials; and
 - iii) when necessary to ensure firm footing, sprinkled with sand or other suitable abrasive material [Sec. 5.1(s)].

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