

# Housekeeping Quiz



## QUESTION

What is the last step in having **achieved** good housekeeping order and why is it critical”

## ANSWER

In a simple words it is the inspection process. It is the way to check for any deficiencies or short ‘comings in an effective sound good housekeeping program.

## WHY IS IT RIGHT

## ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE HOUSEKEEPING PROGRAM

### A. Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

Employers should select adequate flooring (e.g., cement, ceramic tile or another material), as different types of flooring hold up better under certain conditions.

To help prevent slip, trip and fall incidents, the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety recommends the following:

- Report and clean up spills and leaks.
- Keep aisles and exits clear of items.
- Consider installing mirrors and warning signs to help with blind spots.
- Replace worn, ripped or damage flooring.
- Consider installing anti-slip flooring in areas that

- can't always be cleaned.
- Use drip pans and guards.

## **B. Eliminate Fire Hazards**

Employees are responsible for keeping unnecessary combustible materials from accumulating in the work area.

- Keep combustible materials in the work area only in amounts needed for the job. When they are unneeded, move them to an assigned safe storage area.
- Store quick-burning, flammable materials in designated locations away from ignition sources.
- Avoid contaminating clothes with flammable liquids. Change clothes if contamination occurs.
- Keep passageways and fire doors free of obstructions. Stairwell doors should be kept closed. Do not store items in stairwells.
- Keep materials at least 18 inches away from automatic sprinklers, fire extinguishers and sprinkler controls. The 18-inch distance is required, but 24 to 36 inches is recommended. Clearance of 3 feet is required between piled material and the ceiling. If stock is piled more than 15 feet high, clearance should be doubled. Check applicable codes, including Life Safety Code, ANSI/NFPA 101-2009.
- Hazards in electrical areas should be reported, and work orders should be issued to fix them.

## **C. Avoid Tracking Materials**

Work-area mats ' which can be cloth or sticky-topped ' should be kept clean and maintained. This helps prevent the spread of hazardous materials to other work areas or home. Check all mats to ensure they are not tripping hazards.

Separate cleaning protocols may be needed for different areas to prevent cross-contamination, Norton notes. Avoid using the

same mop to clean both an oily spill and in another area, for example.

If the materials are toxic, industrial hygiene testing, uniforms and showering facilities might be needed. Employees who work with toxic materials should not wear their work clothes home, Ahrenholz.

#### **D. Prevent Falling Objects**

Protections such as a toe board, toe rail or net can help prevent objects from falling and hitting workers or equipment.

Stacking boxes and materials straight up and down to keep them from falling. Place heavy objects on lower shelves, and keep equipment away from the edges of desks and tables. Also, refrain from stacking objects in areas where workers walk, including aisles.

Keep layout in mind so workers are not exposed to hazards as they walk through areas, Norton added.

#### **E. Clear Clutter**

A cluttered workplace can lead to ergonomics issues and possible injuries because workers have less space to move.

Keep aisles, stairways, emergency exits, electrical panels and doors clear of clutter, and purge untidy areas. Empty trash receptacles before they overflow.

#### **F. Inspect Personal Protective Equipment and Tools**

Wear basic PPE ‘ such as closed-toe shoes and safety glasses ‘ while performing housekeeping. Determine what type of PPE to don based on the potential risks.

Regularly inspect, clean and fix tools, according to CCOHS. Remove any damaged tools from the work area.

#### **G. Maintain Light Fixtures**

Dirty light fixtures reduce essential light levels. Clean light fixtures can improve lighting efficiency significantly.

## **H. Aisles and Stairways**

Aisles should be wide enough to accommodate people and vehicles comfortably and safely. Aisle space allows for the movement of people, products and materials. Warning signs and mirrors can improve sight-lines in blind corners. Arranging aisles properly encourages people to use them so that they do not take shortcuts through hazardous areas.

Keeping aisles and stairways clear is important. They should not be used for temporary “overflow” or “bottleneck” storage. Stairways and aisles also require adequate lighting.

## **I. Control**

The best way to control spills is to stop them before they happen. Regularly cleaning and maintaining machines and equipment is one way. Another is to use drip pans and guards where possible spills might occur. When spills do occur, it is important to clean them up immediately. Absorbent materials are useful for wiping up greasy, oily or other liquid spills. Used absorbents must be disposed of properly and safely.

## **J. Tools and Equipment**

Tool housekeeping is very important, whether in the tool room, on the rack, in the yard, or on the bench. Tools require suitable fixtures with marked locations to provide an orderly arrangement. Returning tools promptly after use reduces the chance of it being misplaced or lost. Workers should regularly inspect, clean and repair all tools and take any damaged or worn tools out of service.

## **K. Waste Disposal**

The regular collection, grading and sorting of scrap contribute to good housekeeping practices. It also makes it

possible to separate materials that can be recycled from those going to waste disposal facilities.

Allowing material to build up on the floor wastes time and energy since additional time is required for cleaning it up. Placing scrap containers near where the waste is produced encourages orderly waste disposal and makes collection easier. All waste receptacles should be clearly labelled (e.g., recyclable glass, plastic, scrap metal, etc.).

## **L. Storage**

Good organization of stored materials is essential for overcoming material storage problems whether on a temporary or permanent basis. There will also be fewer strain injuries if the amount of handling is reduced, especially if less manual material handling is required. The location of the stockpiles should not interfere with work but they should still be readily available when required. Stored materials should allow at least one meter (or about three feet) of clear space under sprinkler heads.

Stacking cartons and drums on a firm foundation and cross tying them, where necessary, reduces the chance of their movement. Stored materials should not obstruct aisles, stairs, exits, fire equipment, emergency eyewash fountains, emergency showers, or first aid stations. All storage areas should be clearly marked.

Flammable, combustible, toxic and other hazardous materials should be stored in approved containers in designated areas that are appropriate for the different hazards that they pose. Storage of materials should meet all requirements specified in the fire codes and the regulations of environmental and occupational health and safety agencies in your jurisdiction.

A work setting, it means much more. Housekeeping is crucial to safe workplaces. It prevents injuries and improve productivity and morale.

## **M. Maintenance**

The maintenance of buildings and equipment may be the most important element of good housekeeping.

Maintenance involves keeping buildings, equipment and machinery in safe, efficient working order and in good repair. It includes maintaining sanitary facilities and regularly painting and cleaning walls. Broken windows, damaged doors, defective plumbing and broken floor surfaces can make a workplace look neglected; these conditions can cause incidents and affect work practices. So it is important to replace or fix broken or damaged items as quickly as possible.

## **N. Dust and Dirt Removal**

Enclosures and exhaust ventilation systems may fail to collect dust, dirt and chips adequately. Vacuum cleaners are suitable for removing light dust and dirt that is not otherwise hazardous. Industrial models have special fittings for cleaning walls, ceilings, ledges, machinery, and other hard-to-reach places where dust and dirt may accumulate.

Special-purpose vacuums are useful for removing hazardous products. For example, vacuum cleaners fitted with HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters may be used to capture fine particles of asbestos or fibreglass.

Dampening (wetting) floors or using sweeping compounds before sweeping reduces the amount of airborne dust. The dust and grime that collect in places like shelves, piping, conduits, light fixtures, reflectors, windows, cupboards and lockers may require manual cleaning.

Compressed air should not be used for removing dust, dirt or chips from equipment or work surfaces.

## **O. Employee Facilities**

Employee facilities need to be adequate, clean and well

maintained. Lockers may be necessary for storing employees' personal belongings. Washroom facilities require cleaning once or more each shift. They also need to have a good supply of soap, towels plus disinfectants, if needed.

If workers are using hazardous products, employee facilities should provide special precautions as needed such as showers, washing facilities and change rooms. Some facilities may require two locker rooms with showers between.

Using such double locker rooms allows workers to shower off workplace contaminants and reduces the chance of contaminating their "street clothes" by keeping their work clothes separated from the clothing that they wear home.

Smoking, eating or drinking in the work area should be prohibited where hazardous products are handled. The eating area should be separate from the work area and should be cleaned properly each shift.

## **P. Surfaces**

**Floors:** Poor floor conditions are a leading cause of incidents so cleaning up spilled oil and other liquids at once is important. Allowing chips, shavings and dust to accumulate can also cause incidents. Trapping chips, shavings and dust before they reach the floor or cleaning them up regularly can prevent their accumulation. Areas that cannot be cleaned continuously, such as entrance ways, should have anti-slip flooring. Keeping floors in good order also means replacing any worn, ripped, or damaged flooring that poses a tripping hazard.

**Walls:** Light-coloured walls reflect light while dirty or dark-coloured walls absorb light. Contrasting colours warn of physical hazards and mark obstructions such as pillars. Paint can highlight railings, guards and other safety equipment, but should never be used as a substitute for guarding. The program should outline the regulations and standards for colours.

## **WHY IS EVERYTHING ELSE WRONG**

### **HOUSEKEEPING AT WORK**

Effective housekeeping can help control or eliminate workplace hazards. Poor housekeeping practices frequently contribute to incidents.

**Effective housekeeping is an ongoing operation: it is not a one-time or hit-and-miss cleanup done occasionally.**

Periodic “panic” cleanups are costly and ineffective in reducing incidents.

### **THE PURPOSE OF WORKPLACE HOUSEKEEPING**

**Poor housekeeping can be a cause of incidents, such as:**

- tripping over loose objects on floors, stairs and platforms
- being hit by falling objects
- slipping on greasy, wet or dirty surfaces
- striking against projecting, poorly stacked items or misplaced material
- cutting, puncturing, or tearing the skin of hands or other parts of the body on projecting nails, wire or steel strapping

### **Benefits of Good Housekeeping Practices**

Effective housekeeping results in:

- reduced handling to ease the flow of materials
- fewer tripping and slipping incidents in clutter-free and spill-free work areas
- decreased fire hazards
- lower worker exposures to hazardous products (e.g. dusts, vapours)
- better control of tools and materials, including inventory and supplies

- more efficient equipment cleanup and maintenance
- better hygienic conditions leading to improved health
- more effective use of space
- reduced property damage by improving preventive maintenance
- less janitorial work
- improved morale
- improved productivity (tools and materials will be easy to find)

## **WORKER TRAINING**

**Worker training** is an essential part of any good housekeeping program. Workers need to know how to work safely with the products they use. They also need to know how to protect other workers such as by posting signs (e.g., “Wet – Slippery Floor”) and reporting any unusual conditions.

Housekeeping order is **“maintained” not “achieved.”** Cleaning and organization must be done regularly, not just at the end of the shift. Integrating housekeeping into jobs can help ensure this is done. A good housekeeping program identifies and assigns responsibilities for the following:

- clean up during the shift
- day-to-day cleanup
- waste disposal
- removal of unused materials
- inspection to ensure cleanup is complete

## **INSPECTION**

**The final step to any housekeeping program is inspection.** It is the only way to check for deficiencies in the program so that changes can be made. Examples of checklists include inspecting offices, manufacturing facilities and equipment.