

SAFE WORK PRACTICE – HOUSEKEEPING

PURPOSE

To provide a sense of the value of maintaining a well-organized and clean workspace and the hazards of failing to do so. Good housekeeping minimizes the risk of worker injury or damage to equipment and the environment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Every Newtz employee is responsible for maintaining good housekeeping in their workspace and surrounding area.

PREREQUISITES

Housekeeping is not just cleanliness. It includes keeping work areas neat and orderly, maintaining halls and floors free of slip and trip hazards, and removing of waste materials (e.g., paper, cardboard) and other fire hazards from work areas. It also requires paying attention to important details such as the layout of the whole workplace, aisle marking, the adequacy of storage facilities, and maintenance. Good housekeeping is also a basic part of incident and fire prevention.

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.

Slips and trips result from some a kind of unintended or unexpected change in the contact between the feet and the ground or walking surface. This fact shows that good housekeeping, quality of walking surfaces (flooring), selection of proper footwear, and appropriate pace of walking are critical for preventing fall incidents. Good housekeeping is the first and the most important (fundamental) level of preventing falls due to slips and trips.

In workplaces where floors may be oily or wet or where workers spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of fall incidents should focus on selecting proper footwear. Properly fitting footwear also increases comfort and prevents fatigue which, in turn, improves safety for the employee.

HAZARDS

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

Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are:

- wet or oily surfaces
- occasional spills

- weather hazards
- loose, unanchored rugs or mats
- flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have same degree of traction in all areas

Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose the balance and, eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are:

- obstructed view
- poor lighting
- clutter in your way
- wrinkled carpeting
- uncovered cables
- bottom drawers not being closed
- uneven (steps, thresholds) walking surfaces

DIRECTIVES

- clean all spills immediately
- mark spills and wet areas
- mop or sweep debris from floors
- remove obstacles from walkways and always keep walkways free of clutter
- secure (tacking, taping, etc.) mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat
- always close file cabinet or storage drawers
- cover cables that cross walkways
- keep working areas and walkways well lit
- replace used light bulbs and faulty switches
- You can reduce the risk of slipping on wet flooring by:
 - taking your time and paying attention to where you are going
 - adjusting your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are doing
 - walking with the feet pointed slightly outward
 - making wide turns at corners
- You can reduce the risk of tripping by:
 - keeping walking areas clear from clutter or obstructions
 - keeping flooring in good condition
 - always using installed light sources that provide sufficient light for your tasks
 - using a flashlight if you enter a dark room where there is no light
 - making sure that things you are carrying or pushing do not prevent you from seeing any obstructions, spills, etc.