

Safety Cop



Get Good Housekeeping Seal

Slips, trips and falls account for a large percentage of all industrial accidents and workplace deaths. It is prudent for all businesses to prevent these very painful and debilitating injuries. Subpart D of the OSHA regulations (29 CFR 1910.20-28) covers housekeeping; guarding floor and wall openings; fixed stairs; portable and fixed ladders; and non-construction scaffolds. Some key points:

Housekeeping

While enforcing good housekeeping is not easy, it is a necessary, everyday function. OSHA requires: "All places of employment, passageways, storerooms and service rooms shall be kept clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition."

A good housekeeping plan covers employee responsibility for workplace maintenance, spill cleanups, waste collection and fire safety. An uncluttered work station is a source of pride for the worker and business, especially when visitors judge the company by its appearance. More importantly, a well-maintained workplace prevents injuries in a number of ways:

- Slips, trips and falls occur less frequently on clean, dry floors with well-defined and uncluttered aisles.
- Good housekeeping eliminates time spent looking for misplaced items and reduces mistakes caused by sloppy conditions
- Proper housekeeping and storage reduces fire hazards (flammable materials and wastes, blocked extinguishers and sprinkler heads, and inaccessible exits).
- Fewer electrical shocks or discharges and tripping hazards caused by loose wires and power cords.

Stairways

Covers, railings and guards should be used to prevent falls. Floor openings of various sizes require specific types of guarding, and open-sided flooring and stairways have their own requirements. Generally, every stairway of four or more risers needs to have standard railings or handrails. The width of the stairway determines the guarding requirements.

Good housekeeping and proper illumination are especially important on stairs.

- Install stair railings at the proper height and fasten securely.
- Always hold onto railings when using the stairs.
- When carrying objects on stairways, always be able to see over the load.

Ladders

Improper use and maintenance of ladders (or failing to use a ladder when required) leads to many falls and injuries. Ladders must be maintained in good condition, inspected frequently and removed from service if defects are noted.

- Stepladders must have metal spreaders or locking devices.
- Workers should always face the ladder.
- Use both hands while climbing and never stand on the top rung.
- Don't use metal ladders near electrical equipment.
- When placing a ladder against a structure, make sure the structure is stable and the ladder's horizontal distance from the structure is at least one-fourth of the ladder's working length.

