

## Loss Control Services – 5 Minute Safety Topic

### Housekeeping

Some of us may be familiar with the stage play and television show "The Odd Couple." If you haven't seen the show, you may have heard about it. Probably not too many of us really identify with Felix Unger, who makes such a big deal out of housekeeping. On the other hand, many do have at least some empathy with Oscar Madison. Although he's depicted as an overgrown slob, with housekeeping the furthest thing from his mind, some see him as just a perennial teenager—and perhaps some consider him an admirably free spirit.

**A Business Connection?** What does this have to do with the work environment? Actually, a great deal! Housekeeping is a very important part of efficiency, safety, and cost control. Good housekeeping can also have a significant impact on the image projected by a school facility.

A private business might look at it this way. Imagine that you are a supplier, entertaining a visitor who is looking for a company that can produce his product at an affordable cost. You want the public areas of your establishment to be a showcase—neat and clean, and perhaps displaying samples of your best work to impress the prospective customer with your abilities. This example can pertain to public schools also.

This is a sensible approach, because a visitor who notes dingy windows, and unattended spills, trash that didn't quite make it to the waste bin, and other evidence of sloppy housekeeping may well take his or her business elsewhere. That's because a cluttered and disorganized workplace tends to suggest immaturity or poor organization skills, and leads to doubts about the quality and reliability of the work itself. Just as housekeeping can reveal a lot about the overall character of an organization, it can also say a lot for what a company thinks about safety, because poor housekeeping allows a variety of hazards to "lie in wait for" an unwary worker. In any successful safety program, safety gets its equal share of management attention along with work schedules, quality, cost, etc. And good housekeeping furthers the achievement of those goals, whereas poor housekeeping works against them.

So your attention to housekeeping contributes to your own and your co-workers' safety—and also to the efficiency and success of the business. That should be powerful motivation, because your own job is only as secure as your company is sound and its business profitable. As employees in the business of education, we need to consider good housekeeping as the norm – not the exception!!!

