

Loss Control Services: SAFETY TOPIC OF THE MONTH

M.0801: HOUSEKEEPING IS NOT KID STUFF**Facilitator Outline**

Purpose: Monterey Educational Risk Management Authority - Loss Control Services provides these monthly topics to promote safety awareness, injury prevention and regulatory compliance for member districts. These topics may be adapted specifically to the needs of your district by editing and reformatting. If desired, the topic may be expanded with video/DVD, Powerpoint, or other media.

Instructions: Make copies of the handouts and quiz for those attending. As the facilitator for this training – please keep track of attendance in accordance with your district recordkeeping requirements. Thirty minutes should be allocated to allow for review/discussion of the handouts and the quiz – it is possible to condense the topic time to 15 minutes or less if time constraints are severe. You may use the quiz as a pre or post discussion topic; using it as a pre-quiz and then discussing the answers after review of the materials is a good way to assure an interactive session in a minimal amount of time.

Answers to Handout #3: Housekeeping Quiz.

1. **False.** Everyone is responsible for keeping the workplace neat and clean, in order to prevent accidents and improve efficiency.
2. **All of these?** Could this be a “trick” question? Obviously, good housekeeping helps prevent trips, falls, fires, and punctures. Maybe even colds!!!! Think about it, if used Kleenex is not left laying around and surfaces are cleaned regularly – less chance for germs to spread.
3. **True.** “Contact” makes the answer rather obvious.
4. **True.** There are numerous Cal-OSHA regulations that require sanitation and good housekeeping in the workplace.
5. **True.** All kinds of bad things can happen when electricity is not respected!
6. **False.** Combustible dust or lint could start a fire due to heat buildup, a spark or other ignition source.
7. **False.** It takes almost no time if you continually put things away and keep the work area clean while you perform all tasks.
8. **True.** Clear and unobstructed aisles and doors allow people to get out quickly—and allow emergency responders to get in.
9. **“Catch fire”**
10. **True.** Reporting hazards in general is a good idea – trying to fix them yourself if not qualified may not be. Plenty of DIY programs on TV make that abundantly clear.
11. The “bonus” question adds extra feedback and interactive discussion from the group.

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HOUSEKEEPING IS NOT KID STUFF

Housekeeping Handout #1 – Can we all relate to this topic?

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. Those of you with children can remember or look forward to their teen years, when you sometimes wondered just what was on their minds—it certainly wasn't housekeeping. Others of you may have that messy phase "to look forward to," possibly with dread, since it seems to go with age.

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!!!

The second page of this handout provides you with a basic checklist for good housekeeping.

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Handout #2: This housekeeping checklist will help remind us of some basic things to keep in mind.

- Keep all tools and materials in their proper place when not in use.
- Avoid lacerations. Keep sharp edges protected from accidental exposure.
- Keep the floor clear at all times. Get help to move heavy or awkward objects.
- Keep aisles, passageways, and fire sprinklers clear and unobstructed.
- Close all drawers. Store heavy items on lower shelves of cabinets.
- Cover or sand off splinters on wood surfaces – keep metal surfaces clean and rust free.
- Use permanent wiring, not extension cords, whenever possible.
- Keep wires and cords untangled and do not allow them to become a trip hazard.
- Keep electrical cords away from heat and water.
- Keep flammable liquids in approved airtight metal containers, away from ignition sources.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Don't let dust or lint build up on machinery or work surfaces.
- Dispose of flammable materials in tight, closed metal containers that are emptied daily.
- Remove only necessary quantities of chemicals from containers.
- Make sure chemical containers are labeled. Keep chemical containers closed when not in use.
- Check chemical containers regularly for leaks.
- Don't let grease or dirt build up on floors or surfaces.
- Keep lighting fixtures clean.
- Report flooring problems – torn carpet, holes, loose boards, and other walking surface hazards.
- Throw away trash promptly and properly.

NOTES:

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Handout #3: PRE -QUIZ “Housekeeping is not kid stuff!”

Name: _____ Date: _____

Department _____ Job Title _____

Instructions: Please provide the best answer for each question – the “best” answer may be open to discussion during review of the quiz!

1. Custodians are the only employees that have to worry about good housekeeping. True False
2. Good housekeeping can help prevent:
 Trips and falls Fires Punctures Colds All of these
3. Contact hazards are objects you can bump into or objects that can hit you. True False
4. Cal-OSHA has a regulation that requires keeping workplaces clean. True False
5. Good housekeeping includes identifying electrical hazards such as extension cords and overloaded circuits. True False
6. Letting dust or lint build up on machinery or work surfaces is not a safety hazard. True False
7. Good housekeeping takes a lot of time out from other tasks. True False
8. A neat and clean work area helps improve emergency response. True False
9. Oil-soaked rags or other combustible materials should be placed in tight closed metal containers so they will not:
 Smell bad Trip you Catch fire Dry out Get stolen
10. A way to prevent trips and falls is to report flooring problems (torn carpet). True False
11. Bonus Question: Do you have something to add to the discussion regarding your experience with the benefits of good housekeeping or the adverse effects of bad housekeeping?

