



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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General Housekeeping in
the Workplace



Housekeeping is a subject that we continue to write about often. It is also a subject that needs to be discussed for obvious reasons. A clean workplace and clean equipment offers a good impression for visitors and outsiders, showing a respect and pride in your workplace. It also enhances the safety in these areas. We continuously reiterate the point that slips, trips and falls are one of the leading causes of injuries in the agriculture industry.

Personnel involved with maintenance are not the only ones that should be concerned with clean shop areas. All employees from farm laborers to office personnel should be trained and oriented in maintaining clean areas for all the same obvious reasons. Following are some tips on maintaining clean and organized workplaces:

Floors and other areas -

- Clean oil spills immediately. All floors should be free of debris and those that can't be cleaned regularly should have a coating of anti-slip covering or flooring.
- Replace worn carpeting, tiles or other floor materials when they become ragged and broken.
- Tools not in use in the shop should be returned to their respective locations, not left on the floor or on work benches.
- Cut down weeds and tall grass around buildings. Weeds, brush and other debris tend to hide trip hazards.

Maintain light fixtures -

- Workshops and equipment compounds should have adequate lighting.

Aisles and stairways -

- Aisles and stairways should be clear of objects that may cause a trip or fall hazard.
- Aisles and stairways should have adequate lighting for the obvious reasons (reduce the potential for slip, trip or fall hazards).

DO's:

- ~ Do keep floors clean and clear of waste
- ~ Keep work areas adequately lighted
- ~ Keep light fixtures clean
- ~ Inspect & clean tools and machinery regularly

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Spill Control -

The best spill control method is to stop them before they happen. Organized programs for cleaning and maintaining buildings and equipment is the best way to avoid or at least reduce the potential for spills. Using drip pans and guards where spills could possibly occur is another safeguard. When and if a spill occurs, it is important to follow the Material Safety Data Sheet and abate the spill immediately. Absorbent shale, absorbent socks or even clean soil or sand are good mediums for abating spills. The contaminated materials must be disposed of carefully and quickly.

Tools and equipment -

Keeping and maintaining tools and other items of equipment are not only good for locating them for projects, but also helps to enhance the total image of the shop and enables the project to finish faster. Clean and repair all tools with problems. Tools that are beyond repair should be removed from service and replaced with new ones.

General maintenance programs -

A good maintenance program provides for inspection, maintenance, upkeeps and repair of tools, equipment, machines and process methods. The program also provides for organized and orderly maintenance of buildings, rolling equipment, and machinery to remain in a safe and efficient working order - which includes regular lubrication and service for all rolling equipment. For the buildings it should include programs for cleaning, removing garbage, painting when needed, cleaning windows and general building repairs as needed.

Waste Disposal -

Collecting, sorting and grading scrap metal and wood all are traits of good housekeeping practices. Allowing scrap to remain around the floors or corners of the shops only creates more work - a potential for a trip hazard - and extra time to clean up the whole "mess." Containers for scrap metal and wood located in convenient areas and good follow up will eliminate idle scrap lying around on the floors and corners of the shop.

Fire Prevention -

Flammables, combustibles and other hazardous materials should be stored in approved containers and cabinets.

DON'T:

- ~ Use aisles & stairways for storage areas
- ~ Allow materials to build up on floors
- ~ Block emergency exits, fire equipment or first aid stations with stored materials
- ~ Store compressed gases near heat sources