

Case study – Housekeeping

Effective housekeeping can eliminate some workplace hazards and help get a job done safely and properly. Poor housekeeping can frequently contribute to accidents by hiding hazards that cause injuries. If the sight of paper, debris, clutter and spills is accepted as normal, then other more serious health and safety hazards may be taken for granted.

Housekeeping is not just about 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 accident and fire prevention. You can assist with good housekeeping practices by:

- cleaning up spills on floors immediately & placing appropriate signage
- keeping walkways clear of obstructions
- storing work materials should be neatly
- removing any waste regularly
- Keeping thoroughfares, emergency exits and firefighting equipment free from obstructions.

Source: Code of Practice – Managing the work environment and facilities.

Case Study

During a Curtin organised event held this year, a spill was discovered on the floor, which although quickly cleaned up, resulted in a visitor to the event slipping on the wet floor. She sustained knee and ankle pain and although no head injury was received, she became unconscious. Staff in the area responded in a timely manner to assist. An investigation into the incident provided the following recommendations;

- ensure signage is included as part of the event risk assessment
- ensure staff and volunteers are informed of the location of the 'wet floor' signs and when to use them.

It is important if you are planning an event or improving housekeeping in your workplace to consider all stages of the process;

- What equipment and tools are required for the job?
- Will signage be necessary?
- Do you need to dispose of equipment, electrical goods and hazardous waste?
- How will you provide information to all staff and/or volunteers?

Source: Code of Practice – Managing the work environment and facilities.